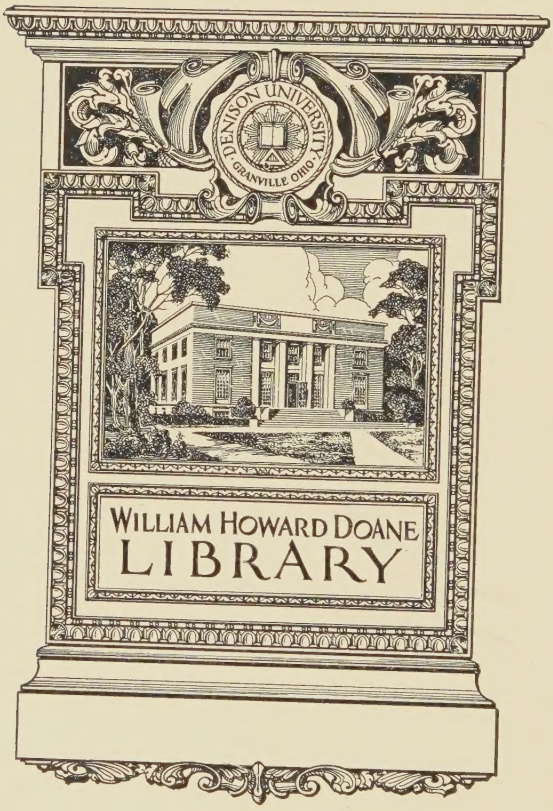
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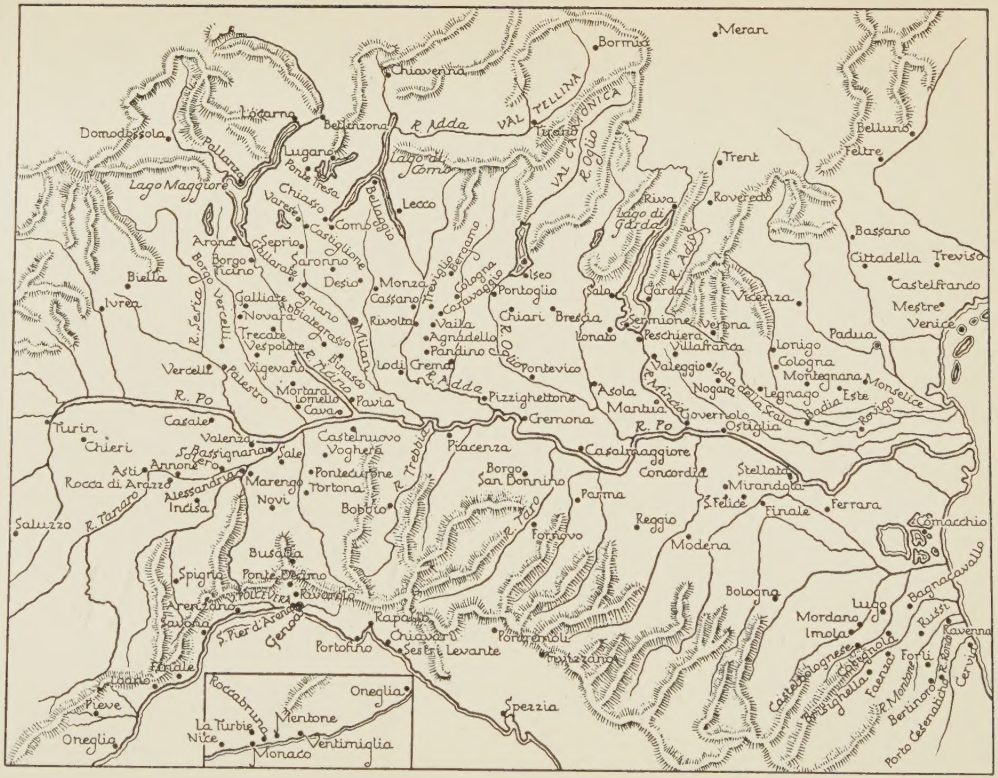
A HISTORY OF FRANCE

VOL. III

REIGN OF LOUIS XII

1498–1507



NORTHERN ITALY

A

HISTORY OF

FRANCE

FROM THE DEATH OF

LOUIS XI

BY

JOHN S. C. BRIDGE

VOLUME III

REIGN OF LOUIS XII

1498-1507

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

XVI

LOUIS XII'S DIVORCE

	PAGE
Accession of Louis XII	1
His prudent policy	2
His position becomes secure	3
He wishes to divorce Jeanne	4
The Pope's hopes for Cesare Borgia	5
Naples declines the Papal proposals	6
The Pope approaches Louis XII	7
A bargain is struck	8
The divorce suit is begun	8
Protest of Jeanne	10
She answers the King's interrogatories	10
Examination of witnesses	11
Speech of Jeanne's counsel	12
Public opinion condemns the King	13
A decree of divorce is pronounced	14
Cesare Borgia starts for France	14
Cesare in Provence and at Chinon	15
Machiavelli's story of his sharp practices	16
The divorce a political necessity	17
Louis wishes to marry Anne of Brittany	18
Terms of the marriage contract	19
Louis and Anne are married	20
Marriage of Cesare Borgia	21
Jeanne retires to Bourges	23
Character of Louis XII	24
Influence of Anne of Brittany	25
Georges d'Amboise	27
Michelet's picture of him	29
Account of Louis' Court by the Venetian ambassadors	31
The chief courtiers and their opinions	32
Good fortune of Louis in acceding peaceably	33
Louis' character	33
His fiscal reforms	34
His military measures	35
His foreign policy	35
His attitude to Venice	36

XVII

LOUIS XII AND LUDOVIC SFORZA

PAGE

The Orleanist claim to Milan 38
The Visconti family 38
Valentine Visconti marries the Duke of Orleans . . 39
Gian Galeazzo Visconti's three investitures . . . 39
His three wills 40
Filippo Maria Visconti 40
His will: Milan passes to the Sforzas 41
Doubtful validity of the Orleanist claim 42
Louis XII's belief in it 43
International politics at the time of Louis' accession . . 43
Louis makes peace with England 44
He makes peace with Spain 46
Hostile attitude of Maximilian 48
He addresses his nobles on French iniquities . . . 48
He invades Burgundy 50
The Archduke Philip makes peace with Louis XII . . 50
And does homage 51
Geographical and military importance of Switzerland . . 52
Divergent Swiss views about Milan 52
Swiss relations with France 53
Swiss relations with Maximilian 54
Treaty between Louis XII and the Swiss 54
Savoy in 1498 55
Alliance between France and Savoy 56
Situation of Venice in 1498 57
She sends an envoy to Louis XII 58
Three ambassadors follow him 60
They are received in audience at Étampes 60
Court news from France 62
Conference between the ambassadors and the King's advisers 62
Doubts and debates in Venice 63
The ambassadors are instructed to propose an alliance . . 63
Differences in the political aims of France and Venice . . 64
The negotiations hang fire 65
Impatience of Louis and his advisers 66
The treaty is signed 67
Its terms 68
Isolation of Ludovic 69
Weakness and hesitation of Naples 69
Unfriendly attitude of the Pope 70
Selfish policy of the Marquis of Mantua 71

PAGE
Ludovic's unwarrantable faith in Maximilian 72
Misleading reports of his agents 73
His blind confidence 76
Venice breaks off diplomatic relations 76
Ludovic's farewell speech to the Venetian envoy . . . 77

XVIII

THE CONQUEST OF MILAN

Louis XII's financial preparations 79
His military measures 80
The army of invasion 81
The command is given to Trivulzio 82
Ludovic's preparations 83
His plan of campaign 84
Hopelessness of his situation 85
Trivulzio takes the field 85
His first successes 86
Fall of Alessandria 87
Venetian operations 88
Flight of Ludovic 89
Trivulzio occupies Milan 90
Surrender of the Castello 91
Louis XII enters Milan 92
Trivulzio's rule in Milan 94
Milan becomes hostile to the French 95
Excesses of the French 97
Milan on the brink of revolution 98
Ludovic in exile 98
He is invited to return 99
He secures support in Switzerland 99
He enters Lombardy 100
Trivulzio evacuates Milan 101
Ludovic re-enters his capital 102
Trivulzio's retreat to Novara 103
March of Yves d'Alègre from Romagna 103
Ludovic captures Vigevano 104
He marches on Novara 105
Novara surrenders to him 106
La Trémoille is sent to Italy 106
Distress in Milan 108
La Trémoille moves on Novara 109
Ludovic's Swiss troops refuse to fight 110
Danger of Ludovic's position 110

PAGE

He negotiates with Ligny 111
Collapse of his army 112
He is captured 113
La Trémoille receives the thanks of the King . . . 114
And the congratulations of his family 114
Ludovic is removed to France 115
His captivity 117
Eclipse of the House of Sforza 117
Submission of Milan 118
Punishment of the Ghibellines 119
Trivulzio is dismissed from office 119
Prosperity of Milan under French rule 120
French influence in Italy 121
Unfortunate consequences for Venice 121
Cesare Borgia in Romagna 122
France and Florence 123
Louis XII promises help against Pisa 124
A French force is sent to Tuscany 125
Its failure 126
Anger of Louis XII 127
Demands of the Swiss mercenaries 127
Their mutinous conduct 128
The Swiss occupy Bellinzona 129
Claims of the Forest Cantons 130
A Swiss force invades Lombardy 131
The Cardinal of Rouen negotiates a truce 131
The Forest Cantons refuse to accept it 132
Louis cedes Bellinzona by the treaty of Arona . . . 132

XIX

THE PARTITION OF NAPLES

Louis XII's designs against Naples 134
The Florentine ambassadors think them impracticable . . 134
Ferdinand of Aragon proposes a partition 135
A partition treaty is signed at Granada 136
The treaty discussed 137
The Catholic sovereigns defend their policy 138
The French army sets out 140
The Pope grants an investiture to Louis and Ferdinand . 140
Federigo prepares to defend himself 141
Capture and sack of Capua by the French 141
The French enter Naples 143

PAGE
Submission of Federigo 144
Treachery of Ferdinand to Federigo's heir 145
Unsuccessful French attempts to help Venice against the Turk 145
Louis and Anne of Brittany prepare another armada . . 147
Unsuccessful attack on Mytilene 148
The fleet is dispersed by storms 149
The partition treaty gives rise to disputes 150
The French Viceroy precipitates a conflict 151
Gonsalvo de Cordova retires to Barletta 152
His skill and courage in a difficult situation 153
Nemours' ineffective leadership 153
Cesare Borgia's aggression in northern Italy 154
Louis XII dares not quarrel with him 155
They are reconciled 156
Prospects of a French victory in Naples 157
These prospects undergo a change 158
Capture of La Palice at Ruvo 159
Disaster to Prégent de Bidoux at Otranto 160
Louis XII's anger with the Venetians 161
Difficulties of the Venetians as neutrals 162
'Last gleams of the light of chivalry' 165
Combat of the Eleven 165
Duel of Bayard and Sotomayor 167
Combat of the Thirteen 168
The Archduke Philip negotiates a treaty at Lyons . . 171
Gonsalvo refuses to obey the order to cease hostilities . . 173
Defeat of d'Aubigny at Seminara 173
Defeat of Nemours at Cerignola 174
Gonsalvo enters Naples 178
Reduction of the castles 179
Siege of Gaeta 179
Louis XII prepares to attack Spain 180
Failure of the French before Salces 181
Renewed aggression of Cesare Borgia 182
Death of Pope Alexander VI 183
The Doge's story of his last illness 183
Georges d'Amboise a candidate for the Papacy . . . 184
Attitude of Giuliano della Rovere 185
Critical situation in Rome 185
Cesare Borgia agrees to support the French 186
D'Amboise, della Rovere, and Ascanio Sforza . . . 186
Election of Pius III 187
The Orsini join the Spaniards 188
The Venetians are suspected of having arranged it . . 190

PAGE

Death of Pius III and intrigues of the Cardinals . . . 191
Giuliano della Rovere is elected Pope 191
Legation of Georges d'Amboise: its importance . . . 192
The French army reaches the Garigliano 193
Bayard and others cross the river 194
Sufferings of the armies from bad weather and scarcity . . 194
Machiavelli's estimate of the situation 196
An eye-witness' report 197
Gonsalvo delivers a surprise attack 197
The French retreat and are routed 198
Surrender of Gaeta 199
Alviano's tribute to Gonsalvo 200
Miseries endured by the French troops 200
Enterprise and courage of Louis d'Ars 202
Causes of the French failure 203

XX

THE MARRIAGE OF MADAME CLAUDE

European diplomacy in the first decade of the sixteenth century 204
Madame Claude and her inheritance 204
Her hand is sought for the Archduke's son 205
Louis XII's attitude towards the proposal 206
Anne of Brittany strongly supports it 206
The King's mental reservations 207
Treaty of Lyons, August 1501 207
A masque in its honour 208
Treaty of Trent, October 1501 209
The Archduke is invited to France 210
Debate in his Council 210
Philip and Joanna at Blois 212
Articles of interpretation of the Treaty of Trent . . . 212
Maximilian refuses to grant the investiture of Milan . . 213
Proposed marriage of the Prince of Wales and Margaret of Angoulême 214
Alarm of Isabella 215
Ferdinand's trickery 216
Three treaties signed at Blois 216
Louis is invested with Milan 218
Description of the ceremonies 218
Death of Isabella and its consequences 221
Ferdinand's grievances against the Archduke . . . 222
Secret negotiations between Ferdinand and Louis XII . . 223

PAGE
Ferdinand marries Germaine de Foix 224
Marriage proposals from England 224
Marshal de Gié charged with high treason 225
Theories of the crime in French law 226
Gié's character and career 226
He becomes guardian of Francis of Angoulême . . . 227
His relations with Louise of Savoy 228
His relations with the Queen 228
Hostility of Georges d'Amboise 229
What Gié had really done 230
Pontbriand's accusation 231
A prosecution instituted 232
The Procureur-Général's indictment 233
Evidence of the Pontbriand brothers 233
Evidence of Louise of Savoy 234
Evidence of d'Albret 234
Evidence of the Seigneur de Segré 235
Evidence of Ploret and other witnesses 236
Examination of Gié 237
The Grand Conseil adjourns the hearing 239
The case is transferred to the Parlement of Toulouse . . 240
The Parlement requests evidence from the King . . . 240
Judgement is delivered 241
Reflections upon the trial 241
The King regrets his engagements to Austria . . . 242
Unsatisfactory state of his health 242
Friction between France and Austria 243
Pacific intervention of the King and Queen 244
The Franco-Spanish alliance revives Austrian suspicions . 245
The rupture of Claude's engagement mooted . . . 245
Negotiations of Philip's ambassadors in France . . . 246
The Estates are summoned to meet at Tours . . 247
They address Louis as the 'Père du Peuple', and petition that Claude may marry Francis 248
The Council advises compliance 249
Louis informs the Estates that their petition is granted . . 249
Claude and Francis are betrothed 250
The Queen's vexation 250

XXI

THE REVOLT OF GENOA

PAGE

Character of Julius II 252
His policy 253
His attitude towards Cesare Borgia 254
Usurpations of the Venetians 255
Unrest in Romagna 256
Julius appeals to Venice 257
The appeal is ignored 257
Opinion in Rome 258
Julius threatens Venice 259
French feeling against Venice 259
Secret treaty of Blois 261
Its effects 262
Julius and Louis quarrel 262
Julius takes Perugia 263
Hesitating policy of Louis XII 264
Julius takes Bologna 265
Feuds in Genoa 266
The first disturbances 267
Louis XII writes to Genoa 270
Remonstrance of the nobles 270
Ravenstein goes to Genoa 272
The Fieschi are expelled 273
The Genoese attack the Riviera di Levante 274
Ravenstein leaves Genoa 275
The nobles accuse him of corrupt practices 275
The Riviera di Ponente 277
The Grimaldi in Monaco 277
Genoese designs on Monaco 278
The Genoese army encamps before Monaco 279
Formidableness of its task and inadequacy of its resources . 279
Siege of Monaco 280
The Genoese fail in a final assault 281
Growing anger of Louis XII 282
Salazar and the Genoese 282
Fall of the Castellaccio 284
Genoa declares war on Louis XII 284
Siege of the Castelletto 284
Paolo da Novi elected Doge 285
The French advance on Genoa 286
Defeat of the Genoese 287
Louis XII enters the city 288

PAGE
Punishment of Genoa 289
The Pope and the revolt of Genoa 290
The Emperor and the revolt of Genoa 290
Ferdinand of Aragon draws near to Louis XII . . . 291
They agree to meet at Savona 291
Ferdinand reaches Savona and is welcomed by Louis XII . 291
Gonsalvo de Cordova and his French hosts 293
Secret conferences of Ferdinand and Louis 293

INDEX 295

SKETCH MAP OF NORTHERN ITALY . . *Frontispiece*

SKETCH MAP OF THE KINGDOM OF NAPLES. *At end*

XVI

LOUIS XII'S DIVORCE

The sudden death of Charles VIII filled the French Court with sorrow, for that heedless circle had not taken much account of the dead King's failings, whilst his virtues had won for him true affection and regard. With the sorrow there was mingled a feeling of perplexity. Of the children born to Charles by his marriage with Anne of Brittany none save the little Dauphin, Charles Orlando, had survived birth for more than a brief period; Charles Orlando had recently died at the age of three; and in Charles VIII the direct Valois line became extinct. To whom did the Crown descend? That Louis, Duke of Orleans, the great-grandson of Charles V through that King's second son, was the next heir, there could be no doubt; but there was a doubt, or so many thought, whether his conduct had not been such as to involve a forfeiture of his rights. Had he not rebelled against the Crown, been captured on the field of battle fighting for the enemies of France, and suffered imprisonment as the penalty of high treason? Could a traitor be heir to the throne?

Louis was not at Amboise at the time of Charles' fatal seizure, for of late his relations with the Court had not been happy. Whilst he had angered the King by his refusal to take command of the French forces which were sent to Italy in 1497, the evident satisfaction with which he had regarded the death of the little Dauphin, so opportune for his own hopes, had aroused a deep resentment in the mind of the bereaved Queen. During recent months there had been some talk of an inquiry into the administration of the Duchy of Normandy, of which Louis was Governor; local officials had been summoned to Court, to furnish information; and the Duke and his chief henchman, Georges d'Amboise, Archbishop of Rouen, had deemed it prudent to leave Normandy for Blois, there to do whatever might be possible to justify themselves in the eyes of a suspicious sovereign. Such was the posture of affairs, when on Palm Sunday morning, 1498, a courier sent from Amboise by the Prince of Orange came galloping to Blois, hastened to the presence of the Duke,

and, kneeling before him, delivered the startling message: 'Le Roi est mort. Vive le Roi!'

Orange followed hard upon the heels of his messenger, and with him came du Bouchage, Ligny, d'Aubigny, and many more who in their several ways had been conspicuously identified with the late King's service. Amongst them were the men to whom the once rebel Duke had owed his defeat, and the chance which had called him to power must have caused anxious forebodings in the minds of La Trémoille, who had taken him prisoner at Saint-Aubin-du-Cormier, and of Marshal de Gié, who had organized that decisive victory. The new King was soon to show that all such fears might be dismissed. Tradition credits him with a specific declaration that a King of France does not avenge the wrongs of a Duke of Orleans; and it has more than once been remarked that, if he did not explicitly express this sentiment, he undoubtedly acted in its generous spirit. A man of a meaner nature and a narrower mind would have hated Charles' servants as the authors of his past misfortunes, and would have seen in his sudden accession to power a fortunate opportunity for revenge. Louis was cast in a different mould; whatever his faults and failings, at least they did not comprise the smallest inclination towards cowardice or tyranny. In the actions of La Trémoille and Gié he was wise enough to recognize a proof of sterling loyalty to the Crown; and, now himself a King, he was prudent enough to desire that such loyalty should be enlisted in his own service. He would deserve such a consummation, if tact, moderation, gratitude, and magnanimity could attract devotion and efface the memory of an unhappy past. All who came from the Court of the dead Charles were received and made welcome. Louis de la Trémoille, summoned specially to the Royal presence, was confirmed in all his offices and appointments with the flattering request that he would serve his new master as faithfully as he had served the old. Another step was also taken, of greater intrinsic importance and yet more significant of the new King's policy. Anne de Beaujeu and her husband were at their home at Moulins, when Charles died. The attitude which they might adopt would contribute materially either to deepen the perplexity of the Court or to decide the waverers and dash the hopes of those who would

have welcomed the prospect of a disputed succession. They behaved with a generous loyalty in harmony with their own high traditions. To their message of congratulation Louis replied with a cordial invitation to them to come and visit his Court; and their acceptance of this overture produced a noteworthy manifestation of Royal gratitude. In conferring his daughter's hand upon the Bourbon cadet, Louis XI had stipulated that, if Beaujeu should inherit the Bourbon fiefs and die without leaving male issue, then after the deaths of the spouses those fiefs should revert to the Crown. The situation covered by this stipulation might now be looked for; the only issue of the Beaujeu marriage was a daughter, Suzanne; and the earnest longing of her parents was to marry their child to the Montpensier heir to the Dukedom, and to pass on intact to this young couple the princely inheritance which they themselves enjoyed. The accomplishment of this long-cherished hope they were to owe to the grateful Louis, who authorized the union of the Bourbon heiress with the future Constable, and renounced the reversion which Louis XI had reserved to the Crown.

During the first few weeks of the new reign the Duke of Milan, who had so much to fear from the advent to power of Louis of Orleans, received from his agents in France many comforting assurances. They told him that Anne of Brittany was pregnant—news which, if true, would have had an important bearing on the situation; they declared that Louis had many enemies; and they assured him that these enemies were going to join hands with the Bourbons to prevent his accession to the throne. A very different estimate of the situation was formed by an observer who was in a better position to know the facts, and whose judgement was undisturbed by prejudice. A correspondent of the Chancellor of Savoy wrote to tell him how all the world had gone off to Louis, and how Louis had been acknowledged as King. 'Those who directed the late King', this writer continued, 'are all in favour with the new one; he is guided by their counsel and by that of other sensible persons; and I am certain that his management of affairs will be very different from that of his predecessor, for he takes no step without good advice, the Prince of Orange being his chief counsellor. All who come to him he pleases by his gracious welcome.

The change of sovereigns has made but little difference, for the King has confirmed everybody in their offices. . . . The frontiers of the kingdom are well guarded, so that none of his neighbours can injure or annoy him, and he is obeyed by all his captains, men-at-arms, and other subjects every whit as implicitly as though he had ruled over France for a hundred years.' [1]

Louis mounted the throne with certain fixed resolves: he would put away the wife whom Louis XI had forced upon him, marry his predecessor's widow, and save Brittany; he would assert his title as the Visconti heir of Milan; and he would revive the Angevin claim to Naples, which Charles had attempted unsuccessfully to enforce. Of these designs the two latter, which demanded diplomatic and military preparation, could not immediately be put in hand. The others were domestic matters, in which no foreigner but the Pope would be concerned; they could therefore be begun at once; and they were the most urgent and important of all.

It could not be disputed that Louis had been forced to marry Jeanne against his will, and it could scarcely be a matter for surprise, if he should desire to be freed from a union entered into in boyhood and under the constraint of fear. The unhappy Jeanne possessed in a superlative degree the greatest moral qualities which can adorn her sex; from the earliest days of a desolate childhood she had served an ennobling apprenticeship to patience and pity, to gentleness and resignation; but beauty of character found no expression in beauty of outward form, and with her ugly features and disproportioned frame, coarse, clumsy, and deformed, Jeanne was as lacking as the sorriest cripple in the kingdom in the physical attributes which women covet and men admire. Deservedly dear as she might be to the few to whom she was intimately known, the casual observer was enabled to comprehend at a glance the feeling of aversion which a presence so repellent must inspire in the mind of a lively husband. With the feeling of aversion there mingled in Louis' mind a bitter sense of injury, for he believed that she had been thrust

[1] L. G. Pélissier, 'Documents sur la première année du règne de Louis XII,' in *Bulletin historique et philologique du Comité des Travaux historiques et scientifiques*, 1890, pp. 51–2. The Prince of Orange soon afterwards left the Court to go and govern Brittany for the Queen.

upon him because her physical malformation was such as to preclude the possibility of child-bearing; and it was a fact that in a notorious letter to a confidant her own father had admitted that the probable sterility of the marriage was the feature which commended it to his favour. If Jeanne had never yet occupied the place to which marriage should have entitled her, the fault was not hers. Denied its rights and pleasures, she had striven humbly and patiently to fulfil its duties. When Louis had lain sick of the smallpox, she had sat by his bed-side, heedless of the risk; when he was thrown into prison, she had hastened to him, and exerted herself to procure his release. Yet every effort had been vain against an invincible repugnance. Louis forbade her name to be mentioned in his presence, turned his back upon her, if compelled to be in her company, declared openly that he had married her under duress, and was prevented from getting rid of her only by fear, and attempted to justify his life of dissipation by the plea that he was not a married man. Such was the pitiful story of the Royal marriage which it was now sought to dissolve.

To obtain its dissolution, it would be necessary to enlist the co-operation of the Pope, for in the matrimonial affairs of Royal persons the Church was accustomed to speak by the mouth of her Supreme Head. Chance directed that the approaches of the King of France should be made in a moment not unfavourable to success. In the League of Venice the Italian powers had come together under the pressure of the French peril, but the union was not such as to survive the removal of the danger by which it had been called into being. In Alexander VI the circumstances of Charles' invasion had led to a change of front without producing a change of heart; his policy remained what it had always been, essentially personal and selfish; and just as Ludovic of Milan had abandoned his allies in the treaty of Vercelli, so the Pope would be ready to desert them, whenever it should appear that desertion was likely to be safe and profitable. The objects which had been first with him before Charles came were first with him still, and he was still resolved to employ the resources of the Papacy for the extension of the temporal power and the aggrandizement of his children. In the prosecution of these ends he suffered a severe check when

his eldest and most loved son, the Duke of Gandia, was murdered in the streets of Rome and cast ignominiously into the Tiber, for the dagger of the assassin struck from the Pope's hand the chief instrument of his plans. But no sooner did Alexander begin to recover from the first stupor of grief than he set about evolving plans for making good his loss. His scheme was to replace the lost instrument with another tool from the same forge; and to this end he designed to free his second son, Cesare, the Cardinal, from his clerical orders, ally him by marriage with some Royal House, and furnish him with means and opportunity to found a Borgia principality.

For establishing Cesare as a layman, the Pope looked at first to Naples, offering a double alliance, whereby his daughter, Lucrezia, should become the wife of Alfonso's illegitimate son, the Duke of Bisceglie, and Cesare should marry King Federigo's lawful daughter, Carlotta, the heiress of Altamura and Taranto. In these proposals he received the warm support of Milanese diplomacy, for Ludovic was still nervous of a French intervention in Italy, and saw in a firm union between Naples and the Papacy the surest means of conjuring the peril. But the scheme made shipwreck on unsuspected obstacles, for every approach to Cesare's matrimonial haven was blocked by the invincible reluctance of the intended bride and by her father's incurable distaste for a match which he deemed shameful. Carlotta resolutely maintained that nothing in the world would ever induce her to be known as 'la Cardinala', 'and the short-sighted tenacity of her father, adamant in his refusal, sealed the fate of the Aragonese dynasty in Naples'.[1] 'It seems to me', he said, 'that the Pope's son, who is a Cardinal, is not a person to whom I should give my daughter's hand, Pope's son though he be.' Let it be made lawful for a Cardinal to marry and retain his purple, he scornfully added, and then, perhaps, the proposal might merit consideration.[2] From this uncompromising attitude he was not to be turned by Papal promises or Milanese persuasions; he assured Gonsalvo de Cordova that he would

[1] Alessandro Luzio, 'Isabella d'Este e i Borgia', in *Archivio Storico Lombardo*, Series V, Anno XLI, Part ii (1914), p. 507.

[2] Sanuto, *I Diarii*, vol. i, col. 988; L. G. Pélissier, 'Sopra alcuni documenti relativi all' alleanza tra Alessandro VI e Luigi XII (1498–9)', in *Archivio della R. Socictà Romana di Storia Patria*, vol. xvii, pp. 305–8.

rather lose his throne and his life than retain them by such a bargain; and in this defiant mood he presently clinched matters by putting an end to the negotiations.

Smarting under this rebuff, the Pope did the very thing that Ludovic had been afraid of, and turned to Federigo's enemies in France, to offer the alliance which Federigo had spurned. Success would probably not have been impossible of attainment, had it been necessary to make the compact with Charles VIII, with whom in March 1498, he had resumed relations by the initiation of secret negotiations. The death of Charles in the following month made success assured. Alike in his foreign policy and in his matrimonial projects the new French sovereign was dependent upon Papal aid, and in this dependence Alexander and his ambitious son were quick to perceive a favourable chance. The embassies which a demise of the French Crown would occasion, and which would go from Rome to Paris to offer congratulations and from France to the Vatican to render obedience, would make it easy to enter upon the discussion of graver affairs. When Louis sent ambassadors to announce his accession, Alexander at once replied by dispatching a distinguished embassy in return, to condole with Louis upon the death of Charles, to congratulate him upon his own accession, and to transact 'other business'. The ambassadors reached Paris towards the end of July, and were received by the King in a secret audience, in which the question of an alliance between Louis and Alexander was almost certainly discussed, though seemingly without definite result. Meanwhile negotiations had also been carried on by letter between France and Rome; in June a secret envoy, the Bishop of Ceuta, was dispatched to the French Court; della Rovere, the old enemy of the Borgias, who had grown weary of exile, and sought a reconciliation with the Pope, was made Legate of Avignon; and a suggestion was put forward that Cesare himself should visit France, to negotiate a close alliance. At the same time Louis sent to Rome, to ask for a divorce from Jeanne, a dispensation to marry Anne of Brittany, and the grant of a red hat for Georges d'Amboise, letting it be understood that, if these favours were granted, he would be prepared to further the Pope's designs for establishing Cesare in a position of secular power.

By August the bargain was struck. Louis was to invest Cesare with the counties of Valentinois and Diois, after raising the former to the status of a duchy; he was to give him the command of a company of a hundred lances, which were to be available for service in Italy or elsewhere; and he was to confer upon him the Order of Saint Michel, a pension of 20,000 francs a year, and the feudal lordship of Asti, when the conquest of Milan should have been completed. In surrendering the counties of Valence and Diois to Cesare, Louis gained an incidental advantage in the closure of a secular dispute between the French Crown and the Papacy, which claimed that those territories had passed to the Church by grant from the last Dauphin. Sometimes acknowledged, but more frequently contested, by French sovereigns and Parlements, that claim had been a source of recurrent difficulties between Paris and Rome, and it was desirable that an amicable solution should be found. Early in August letters patent conferring Valence and Diois upon Cesare were signed at Étampes, and the Pope was informed that M. de Villeneuve, Baron de Trans, would be sent from Marseilles with a French fleet, to conduct the new Duke to France. Meanwhile the Pope took the steps which were necessary to carry out his part of the agreement. On 29th July he issued a bull authorizing an inquiry into the validity of the French King's marriage, and entrusting the conduct of the proceedings to his Nuncio, the Bishop of Ceuta, and to Louis d'Amboise, Bishop of Albi, a brother of the Archbishop of Rouen and a devoted adherent of Louis XII. The choice of judges augured ill for an impartial conduct of the cause, and there was worse to come, for on 13th September, when the nullity suit had barely been opened, Alexander granted to Louis a dispensation to contract a fresh marriage with Anne of Brittany.

The Pope's mandate having been received in France, the proceedings[1] were opened at Tours on 18th August, when the Procureur-Général, appearing for the King, asked for a decree of nullity on four grounds: the spouses were related

[1] For these proceedings see R. de Maulde-la-Clavière, *Procédures politiques du règne de Louis XII*; also the same author's *Jeanne de France, Duchesse d'Orléans et de Berry* (1464–1505). It is to these two books that I am mainly indebted for my account of Jeanne and of her divorce.

in the fourth degree; in addition to the natural affinity between them there was also a spiritual affinity, the father of the bride having been the god-father of the bridegroom, a relationship equivalent in ecclesiastical law to natural paternity; the marriage had been compelled by the threat of violence; it had never been consummated, and Jeanne was physically incapable of bearing children. Of these objections the two first were effectually disposed of by the production of a dispensation issued under Papal authority; and to the plea that this dispensation had not been asked for by the bridegroom it was sufficient to answer that that circumstance in no way affected its validity. The third objection was more serious, for in the canon law lack of consent created an absolute bar to the validity of a marriage; but the difficulty here was that in the same law initial violence might be covered by subsequent cohabitation, which was taken to indicate a belated consent, so that, as the canon lawyers expressed it, *cohabitation purge la crainte*; this presumption was absolute and irrefutable; and from this it followed that a plea of violence would be ineffectual, unless it could also be shown that the 'fear' had never been 'purged'. To show this would be difficult in view of the relations which could be proved to have subsisted between the parties, and it was plain that the King would be compelled to place his chief reliance upon the fourth and most unpleasant of his pleas. 'It was big with scandals, in the midst of the scandal of the suit itself, which involved the memory of a King and the dignity of the whole Royal Family.'[1] Louis XII may, perhaps, have hoped that Jeanne would not contest proceedings, of which every phase must be a humiliation for her, in which she was foredoomed to defeat, and success in which, even could it be won, would have few charms for her modest and unworldly nature. Had Jeanne consulted her own inclinations, she would undoubtedly have allowed the case to go by default. But the disposition to self-effacement had to contend in her with an overmastering sense of duty. Profoundly convinced of the justice of her cause, she thought it incumbent upon her to defend her father's memory and to strive for the maintenance of right. To the decision of the Church she was ready

[1] M. Henry Lemonnier in the *Histoire de France*, ed. Lavisse, vol. v (i), p. 44.

to submit, be that decision what it might; but at whatever cost to herself she deemed it her duty to ensure, so far as lay in her power, that the Church's precedent inquiry should be full and free.[1]

On 6th September Jeanne appeared in person before the Papal Commissioners at Tours, and the painful case began. She was not represented by counsel, for amongst all the gentlemen of the long robe it had not been possible to find one who would hazard the consequences of appearing in opposition to the King, and it was only at a later stage, when the Judges intervened with an express order, that Jeanne was able to procure legal aid. On her second appearance a week later, to reply to the interrogatory of the King's Proctor, she put in a written statement. 'My lords,' ran the paper, 'I am a woman ignorant alike of law and of business, and I am greatly perturbed by this suit. I pray you to bear with me, if I should say aught that may appear unseemly, or if in my replies I should touch upon matters which are not included in my lord the King's interrogatory, and to which I am not required to answer. I claim that such replies should not enure to my prejudice or the King's advantage, and I reiterate my former protest. Never could I have believed that any process could have arisen between the King and me touching this matter. And I beg, my lords, that this protest may be entered on the record of your proceedings.'[2] With the gentle dignity which was to characterize her demeanour at every stage of her cruel ordeal, Jeanne had opened her defence.

Her replies to the interrogatories followed. She said that she had never heard that her marriage had been accomplished by violence; she did not think that her father treated his subjects ill. Neither did she think that the marriage had been the cause of Louis' rebellious behaviour in Brittany. Asked if she was aware that that behaviour had resulted in his imprisonment, she replied that she knew it, and generously forbore to wrest the question to her own advantage by reminding the Court of the part which she had played in procuring his release. Questioned about her alleged physical incapacity, she answered humbly that she was well aware

[1] R. de Maulde, *Jeanne de France*, pp. 277–8.

[2] *Ibid.*, *Procédures politiques*, p. 835; *Jeanne de France*, p. 293.

that she was not as fair as other women, but denied that she differed from them in any essential respect.[1] Would she then submit, she was asked, to an examination by a jury of matrons? Shrinking from this last indignity, she demanded time for consideration; she would be loath to refuse aught which the laws of the Church might justly require, but could not admit the necessity or propriety of such a step.

Before the Court sat again, there came an intimation from Rome that a second partisan of the King, Philippe of Luxemburg, Bishop of Le Mans, newly created a Cardinal, was to be added to the Papal Commission, and the new Cardinal accordingly took his place by the side of the Bishops of Albi and Ceuta, when on 26th September the Court proceeded to the examination of witnesses. Twenty-seven persons came forward to give their testimony in favour of the King; they were of all sorts and conditions, from menial servants to Privy Councillors and Princes of the Church. One of them, the Bishop of Orleans, examined on commission, because he was old and ill, spoke of the wedding ceremony, which he had performed, but remained strangely silent about the vitally important dispensation, which he had issued. Four witnesses only could be found to give evidence for Jeanne, for the courtiers, like the lawyers, feared to espouse a cause which was likely to bring no gain to its adherents. Amongst the four was an old servant of Louis' father, who either knew nothing or would not say what he knew, and the evidence of the other three, who owed everything to the House of Orleans, was either irrelevant or definitely hostile to Jeanne.

From time to time during the proceedings the Procureur-Général reiterated his demand that Jeanne should be examined. Counsel for Jeanne objected that there was no need to inflict any such humiliation upon his client, when it was open to the King to go into the witness-box, and give

[1] 'Questa altra regina', said the anonymous writer of a letter of 18th October 1498, 'dicono se defende cum bone et honeste argumentatione: dicendo ley essere figlia de uno Re e sorella de Re, e per tal causa gli debe meritamente essere havuto bono rispecto; si la natura gli ha negato la beleza del corpo, gli dovea prima consultare ... che concepere non si puo senza conveniente acto, e che una terra che non sia cultivata non produce; e cum queste ragione diffende al meglio che puo la causa sua': L. G. Pélissier, *Documents relatifs au règne de Louis XII et à sa politique en Italie*, p. 118.

evidence which would be decisive. Jeanne herself allowed it to be seen that she would be glad if the whole sorry affair could be brought to an end. She told the Court that her constant desire had been to do the King's pleasure, so far as conscience would permit; it was with reluctance that she had opposed him; and in defending the case she had been actuated entirely by conscientious scruples, and not at all by worldly ambition. Let the theologians satisfy her that she might lawfully do so, and she would withdraw her defence.[1]

On 26th October Jeanne's counsel addressed the Court. Whether because, now that he was fairly launched upon the adventure, he was possessed by the keen advocate's desire to make the most of his case, or because in daily contact with a lonely and pathetic figure his heart had been touched by the spectacle of misfortune so gently and so patiently borne, certain it was that for some reason he had put aside all selfish timidity, and was ready to do battle for his client with all the resources of his forensic skill. He began by advancing certain general propositions, in the light of which, as he maintained, the issue before the Court must be examined. His propositions were these: that it was within the power of the Pope to dispense from all impediments as well natural as spiritual; that to annul a marriage on the ground of fear, it was necessary that the reality of the fear should be established; and that even though there might originally be such a lack of consent as to invalidate a marriage, yet the nullity could be abrogated by subsequent cohabitation. What, he then asked, were the facts in the case before the Court? A valid dispensation had been issued by the Bishop of Orleans, and the couple, when of an age to marry, had been publicly united in the presence of the Princes of the Blood and of a numerous company. They had afterwards lived together, and the existence of conjugal relations between them could be proved out of Louis' own mouth. Then had come the accession of Charles VIII, when the throne was occupied by a child, when the Duke of Orleans was the most powerful person in the kingdom, and when the States-General had met at Tours, to do justice to all men. What an opportunity for the Duke to protest against his marriage! Yet he had not taken it. He had gone to Paris and harangued the University

[1] *Procédures politiques*, pp. 867–8.

and the Parlement, but here again he had made no protest. Could it be suggested that he had been afraid to broach the subject? He had not been afraid to denounce the Government in Paris or to resist it in arms in Brittany. And what had he done to get free from the marriage whilst in Brittany, where the Duke's good relations with the Papacy would have made the way smooth? Had he protested there? On the contrary, to stifle rumours which connected his name with that of the heiress of the Duchy, he had solemnly sworn in a Church at Nantes that he could not marry Anne, because he was already married. In prison he had received Jeanne's visits and had profited by her intervention in his behalf. From Asti, his own possession, where unquestionably he was free, he had more than once written to her, and in these letters he had called her 'm'amie', which was the recognized mode of address from a husband to a wife. The marriage had been publicly celebrated and was valid; if at first it had been tainted by violence, which the defence did not admit, the initial defect had been made good by subsequent cohabitation; and the allegation of sterility was false.[1]

To this powerful plea the Procureur-Général replied as best he could, but it was plain that the case was not going well for the King. Public opinion was moved by Jeanne's misfortunes, and condemned the hypocrisy of judicial proceedings, of which the issue was believed to have been prearranged. The Papal Commissioners became objects of a popular contempt which in truth they scarcely deserved, for, to do them justice, they had treated Jeanne with fairness; and the people nicknamed them Herod, Caiaphas, and Pilate. In Paris a University preacher proclaimed loudly from his pulpit that a woman may not be put away save for the cause of adultery. Another and more celebrated divine, Olivier Maillard, used language of such outspoken condemnation as to infuriate the King's friends, who told him that he had better be careful, or he would find himself tied up in a sack and thrown into the river. He answered defiantly that he did not care whether he went to Paradise by land or by water, and persisted in declaring that Jeanne was and would remain the true Queen. It was time that the scandal of the cause should be ended, and a solution found for the urgent

[1] *Procédures politiques*, pp. 871–84.

Breton affair. Reluctantly, therefore, Louis braced himself to take the step which he had hoped to avoid, but which would ensure success. Jeanne had said that, sooner than submit to examination, she would abide by the King's testimony, and on 5th December he solemnly swore that she had never been his wife. Nothing then remained but to pronounce the verdict of the Court, and on 17th December, in the Church of Saint-Denis at Amboise, the judges declared that the marriage was null and void.[1] Whilst the Court was assembling, a bank of black cloud drifted over the valley of the Loire, and judgement was delivered amid the crash of thunder and the howling of the wind. Quick to recognize a portent in any unseasonable phenomenon, a superstitious populace felt assured that human pity had awakened an echo in the wrath of God.

Every painful impression was deepened when on the very morrow of the decree Cesare Borgia, as unseasonable as the winter thunder-storm, entered Chinon, where the King and his Court were in residence, to parade the pomp and splendour of Renaissance Italy, to deliver the Papal dispensation, and to claim his own reward. The son of the Pope was no longer a Cardinal. Four months before, he had explained in a secret Consistory that it was only to please his father that he had adopted a mode of life for which he had never felt a vocation, and he had then petitioned that he might be set free from the obligations of his sacred profession. The College had left the decision to the Pope, and His Holiness had found himself unable to deny a request which, as he explained to an ambassador, could not be refused without jeopardizing Cesare's spiritual welfare. Thus do all things go amiss in the Church of God, an indignant contemporary complained; there was a time when a Cardinal who wanted to put off his red hat for the laudable purpose of becoming a monk, would yet encounter much opposition in Consistory, whilst now Cesare, who wants to get rid of it that he may become a soldier and a bridegroom, secures general support.[2]

[1] 'Dicimus, declaramus, et pronuntiamus matrimonium inter ipsas partes contractum . . . non tenuisse aut tenere, sed fuisse et esse nullum, nulliusque momenti, obligationis, vel efficaciae; nec obstare quo minus cum alia matrimonium efficax in Domino contrahere valeat prelibatus dominus Actor': Dumont, *Corps Diplomatique*, vol. iii, part ii, p. 404; *Procédures politiques*, p. 943.

[2] Sanuto, *I Diarii*, vol. i, col. 1054.

As it chanced, the envoy of the King of France appeared in Rome on the very day of Cesare's release, to invite him aboard the fleet, which lay at Ostia, waiting to carry him to France. By 1st October he was ready to set forth, and left Rome in more than Royal state, gorgeously apparalled, sumptuously equipped, and escorted by the Cardinals who had lately been his colleagues. Desiring a complete accord with the King, wrote Alexander to Louis with his own hand, he sent him his heart's treasure, the dearest thing he had on earth, his beloved son, the Duke of Valentinois. To make sure that this precious object should appear in a fit setting in his new secular career, the Pope drew upon his treasure with no sparing hand; and it was sarcastically remarked that, had he enjoyed two Papacies, their revenues would not have sufficed him for the embellishment of his son. The Mantuan envoy and others described the result—the gold and jewels, the silks and velvets and cloth of gold, the richly caparisoned horses, the imposing suite of noble Roman youths. Immense quantities of golden and silken stuffs were procured from foreign manufactories, and in Rome itself there was not a shop which had so much as a yard of silk or of cloth of gold or cloth of silver left. Cesare's own robes were stiff with jewels; his night-stool was covered with gold brocade; his chamber-pots were of silver. The Gonzagas, whose stables were the most famous in Europe, were asked to provide his horses, and the animals for which so lofty a destiny was reserved were shod with silver, trapped with finely wrought gold, and decked out in saddle-cloths embroidered with pearls. A hundred servants ministered to Cesare's wants; hundreds of mules carried his enormous treasure. So great a frenzy of ostentatious splendour was likely to startle the frequenters of a frugal 'barbarian' Court.

Borne in the stately *Louise*, the largest ship that flew the flag of France, the gorgeous traveller presently reached Marseilles, where a cavalry escort of 400 men, sent by the King, awaited him. Referring to him as 'my cousin, the Duke of Valentinois', Louis instructed the Archbishop of Aix and all the gentry of the province to honour him in like manner as they would honour the King himself, and similar orders were dispatched to the clergy and gentlemen of Lyons. At Avignon, where Cardinal della Rovere was waiting to

receive and entertain him, the nobility of the district rode in to pay their court. The impression made upon them was not favourable. That Cesare should be visibly disfigured by the shameful disease which had ravaged Italy, they did not greatly mind; but they did mind his insolent bearing and ungracious ways, and they resented the presumption with which he refused to accept the cordon of the Order of Saint Michel, brought to him by the Seigneur de Clérieux, on the ground that he ought not to receive it except at the hand of the King himself. Whether popular or not—and he was probably indifferent to the opinions of a provincial nobility —Cesare found life in Provence agreeable, and was in no hurry to move on. Some one asked the King when the Duke of Valentinois might be expected to reach the Court. 'How should I know?', answered Louis with a smile. 'The Duke is in a land of fair women and fine wines, where he seems to be having a good time. Goodness knows when he will get here.'[1] At last, however, he decided to go forward, left Lyons on 25th November, moved leisurely northwards, and on 17th December reached the neighbourhood of Chinon. Next morning the Archbishop of Rouen, the Seneschal of Toulouse, the Seigneurs de Ravenstein and de Clermont, and many lords and gentlemen of the Court rode out to meet him, and escorted him to the castle, where the King awaited him. His solemn entry 'surpassed in magnificence the triumphal progress of a Roman Emperor'.

According to a story told by Machiavelli,[2] the Pope and his son intended to extort further large concessions from the King of France by suppressing the existence of the dispensation which he was so eager to receive, but were betrayed by the Bishop of Ceuta, who had been supplanted by the Cardinal of Luxemburg on the divorce Commission, and desired to be revenged. 'The dispensation was given to Valenza, when he went to France, without any one knowing that he had it, and he was told to make the King pay a stiff price for it, and not to reveal its existence until he had obtained satisfaction in the matter of a bride and in all else that he wanted. But while his demands were being discussed, the existence of the dispensation was made known to the King

[1] Sanuto, *I Diarii*, vol. ii, col. 152.

[2] In his 'Frammenti Storici', *Opere* (1813 edit.), vol. ii, p. 365.

by the Bishop of Ceuta, who was murdered by Valenza's orders for having revealed such a thing; and so the King, without having got the dispensation and even without having seen it, married King Charles' widow, and left the rest of the business to get itself finished at leisure afterwards.' Borgia methods were such that the story might well have been true; but, as it happened, Machiavelli in this instance had been misinformed; no secret had been made of the grant of the dispensation, which had been in existence for three months; it was handed over by Cesare, along with d'Amboise's red hat, immediately upon his arrival at Chinon; and the Bishop of Ceuta lived for two years longer, and then died far away, where he could scarcely be thought to be within the reach of Borgia arts. Men were not always as clever or as wicked as the author of *The Prince* assumed.

The part played by Louis in these proceedings has often been criticized, and seems even to have shocked the not very squeamish opinion of his own day. 'Whether it was well or ill done', wrote Bayard's biographer, 'God alone knows'; and it has been wittily remarked that his cautious reticence implied a pretty firm assurance about the opinion of the Almighty. Brantôme found in the story of the divorce a theme well suited to his scurrilous pen, and his account may be regarded as a faithful echo of contemporary jest and gossip.[1] That the King's part was neither dignified nor chivalrous, it would be idle to deny, but I think that he may claim to be exonerated from any censure more severe. It was certainly not true that his object was the prosecution of an old love affair, and that he wanted to get rid of Jeanne to gratify an early and abiding attachment to Charles' Queen. There had, indeed, been some talk of his marriage to Anne in the time of his Breton odyssey, but the project had been a political scheme, devised by Landois to consolidate the feudal opposition to the Beaujeus, and Anne at the time was a mere child, for whom the day of love and lovers had not dawned. Nor is there anything to suggest that, when that day did dawn, Louis had acknowledged the empire of Breton charms or succumbed to Breton blandishments. On the contrary, he had worked willingly and zealously to promote the match between Charles and Anne, and after his return from Italy

[1] *Œuvres*, vol. viii, pp. 88–99.

his relations with the Queen had been rather those of enmity than those of love or even of friendship. Political expediency, and not amorous passion, reared the altar on which Jeanne was sacrificed. When Charles and Anne were married, the contract between them had provided for a mutual cession by the spouses of their respective rights to Brittany, and had stipulated that, if Charles should predecease his Queen without leaving children of the union, she should marry his successor or the nearest heir to the throne. The event had come to pass, and it was for the King of France to see that the Duchess of Brittany redeemed her pledge. He could not demand that she should marry the next heir, for that heir was a child. He must therefore marry her himself, or suffer the loss of all that Anne de Beaujeu had won for his country and his throne. The choice could not be doubtful, when he must elect between such alternatives, for, were he not to retain Brittany as the husband of its Duchess, he must witness its severance from the kingdom, and that separation involved the dreadful probability that some other alliance would unite it to the dominions of a rival Royal House. A judge who spoke with the twofold authority of the prelate and the scholar has left it as his considered verdict that, 'if ever the dissolution of a marriage could be justified on grounds of political expediency, the justification might be urged in this case'.[1] A necessity as imperious as any that ever dictated the conduct of a ruler had urged Louis forward in the path which he had trodden, for the maintenance of French unity and the preservation of French security hinged upon the right solution of the Breton problem.

To solve that problem in conformity with French interests, Louis was not only constrained to get rid of Jeanne, but was also obliged to come to terms with the Breton Duchess, and that task was not easy. Anne of Brittany had been most deeply attached to Charles VIII, and his sudden death plunged her into a frenzy of grief. For two days she neither slept nor tasted food, but, crouching on the ground in a corner of her room, she wept incessantly, and refused to be comforted. To those who addressed her she replied that she cared for nothing but to follow her husband to the grave. The Prince of Orange and his wife, who had been on the

[1] Bishop Mandell Creighton, *History of the Papacy*, vol. iii, p. 225.

point of leaving for Burgundy, put off their journey, in order that the Princess might devote herself to the care of her sorrowing mistress. Briçonnet hurried to her side, to offer the consolations of religion; but the dead King's favourite was himself deeply affected, and friend and widow mingled their tears. To mark the extremity of her affliction, Anne declined to put on the white garments which for centuries past French custom had prescribed for the widows of sovereigns, who had thus come to be known as *Reines blanches*. Whatever other Queens might have done, she would be clad in black, because black alone among the colours was like her sorrow and could never fade.

As the first transports of grief subsided, the thought of her beloved Brittany recurred to the mind from which in sorrow or in joy it was never absent for long. The astute Bretonne quickly awoke to the weakness and the strength of her new political situation. The contract with Charles required that she should offer her hand in the French Royal House, and French troops still occupied the strong places in her Duchy. But in that Duchy she had again become the ruler in her own sole right; the former pretensions of the House of Blois had been extinguished by Charles' surrender; and it would be well to lose no time in making an assertion of sovereignty. So she re-established the Chancellorship of Brittany, resumed the minting of money in her own name, summoned the great lords of the province to her side in Paris, and demanded that Louis should withdraw his troops. Sympathetic, deferential, and attentive, Louis had behaved charmingly to the Queen, and had shown a willing generosity in the settlement of her dowry. But when he raised the question of her re-marriage, Anne made difficulties, declaring that she could not marry him, because she did not choose to be his concubine, and knew that no Papal dispensations could ever make her his true wife. Charles, she said, had had two wives, and Heaven had denied him an heir. The same thing would happen to Louis, were he to place himself in a similar position. She had made up her mind, she said, that she would go away and live in Brittany, and the most that Louis could get from her was a promise that she would not bestow her hand on any other suitor.

And then quite suddenly, in August 1498, Anne changed

her mind, and announced that she was willing to marry Louis, if the Pope would set him free. Possibly her previous reluctance had been in part assumed, to induce a sweet reasonableness in the King, when marriage settlements should come to be discussed. That, certainly, was the effect, and the new marriage contract was very different from that into which she had entered upon her marriage with Charles VIII. Then she had been defeated, solitary, and helpless; now she was independent, powerful, and secure in the enjoyment of an undisputed sovereignty.[1] First, it was provided that the marriage should take place in Brittany. Next, the Duchy was to descend to the second son of the marriage, or, in default of male issue, to the second daughter, and, if there should be but one child of the marriage, then to that child's second child, and, in default of issue, then, subject to Louis' life interest, to Anne's right heirs. Further, she was to keep the dowry to which she had become entitled on the death of Charles, and, if Louis should predecease her, she was to be given a second dowry of like amount.[2] The King undertook that all Breton privileges and peculiarities should be preserved. He promised to give back immediately all the strong places in Brittany except Nantes and Fougères, and these places he bound himself to restore also, 'unless within one year we have lawfully married her according to the law of God and the ordinances of the Church, as our desire and intention is to do.'[3] Anne on her part undertook to marry Louis, as soon as his marriage with Jeanne should be annulled. The bargain made, she went off to Brittany, happy in the thought that she had done pretty well for herself and her beloved province.

The moment the Papal Commissioners had pronounced the sentence which set him free, Louis went after her, and on 6th January 1499, in the castle of Nantes, so rich for them both in memories of a less happy past, the Duchess of Brittany became for the second time the Queen of France. If we are to believe the foreign envoys who followed the King to Brittany, witnessed the celebration of his nuptials, and spared no details in sending home the news, Louis

[1] Le Moyne de la Borderie, *Histoire de Bretagne*, vol. iv, p. 593.
[2] Dumont, *Corps diplomatique*, vol. iii, part ii, p. 405.
[3] Casati, *Lettres Royaux*, pp. 58–9.

proved himself an ardent bridegroom; 'and this ardour, though it seemed to her to be a thing rather out of the ordinary, yet was in no wise displeasing to the Queen.'[1]

Another marriage had yet to be arranged, if the bargain with the Pope was to be completed, for Cesare had obtained his Duchy, but still lacked a bride. He had not given up his hope of winning the hand of Carlotta of Naples, who had been brought up in France as a maid of honour to the Queen; and one of the ends which he proposed to himself in the visit to Chinon was to press his suit with the influence of the King to lend it weight. As a student of Borgia history has happily expressed it, however, 'the brilliant entry at Chinon had an obscure morrow.' Despite the intervention of the King and of Cardinals della Rovere and d'Amboise, Carlotta remained obdurate, and could neither be persuaded nor coerced, her refusal proceeding, not, as the King and the Cardinals believed, from feminine obstinacy, nor, as others thought, from filial respect for her father's views, but from a quite simple and natural cause: she had fallen in love with a Breton gentleman in the Queen's Court, and meant to give her hand where she had already given her heart.[2] Louis was so angry that Anne of Brittany had to exert all her influence to save her offending *protégée* from the consequences of his displeasure. The Pope was more angry still: the whole world knew, he said, that Cesare had gone to France in search of a bride, and father and son were both being exposed to general ridicule by the King's failure to honour his engagements. Such were his fury and alarm that he even resumed the interrupted negotiations with Milan and Naples, that he

[1] *Archivio della R. Società Romana di Storia Patria*, vol. xvii, p. 369; *Bulletin historique et philologique*, 1890, p. 110.

[2] Sanuto, *I Diarii*, vol. ii, col. 750. She married the gentleman, a M. de la Rose, soon afterwards, as was recorded by the Venetian ambassador writing from Blois on 31st January 1501 (Sanuto, vol. iii, cols. 1429–30). 'King Federigo's daughter has returned to Blois, and has been married to M. de la Rose, one of the leading nobles of Brittany, with an income of 10,000 ducats already and considerable expectations on the death of an aged relative. The ceremony took place this morning, the King leading the bride on his arm from the palace to the church and conversing with her pleasantly with evident signs of affection. . . . At the celebration of the mass the Cardinal of Rouen preached the sermon, and gave the usual nuptial blessing. The dowry is 100,000 francs: King Federigo has paid 35,000 down, and has promised the balance by a certain date.'

might have a second string to his bow in case the French string should snap. Nothing loath to make the most of the opportunity, Ludovic assured him that the King of France had been playing with him to obtain a dispensation, and, having got it, would prove untrue. Louis did not want to see a new alliance between the Italian powers, or to run any risk of having his dispensation revoked upon the ground of defective information. Something must therefore be done to pacify His Holiness, and Cesare, who was threatening to go off in a huff, must be satisfied with another bride as eligible as Carlotta and of a more pliant disposition. After thinking for a moment of his niece, the Count of Foix's daughter, for whom a more brilliant destiny was reserved, Louis fixed his choice upon another relative, Charlotte d'Albret, the sister of the King of Navarre. As Charlotte was of a lineage as high as Carlotta's, and was incomparably more beautiful, Cesare had nothing to regret in the change of brides. His way was not yet smooth, however, for Charlotte and her father displayed little enthusiasm for the projected alliance, and the Cardinal of Rouen and even the Queen herself were obliged to intervene, before their consents could be obtained. Alain d'Albret's reluctance has been attributed to conscientious scruples, but seems more likely to have proceeded from pride: his view probably was that the illegitimate son of a Pope, without permanent wealth or assured position, was not a good enough match. For such objections a remedy could be found, and a dowry of 120,000 *livres* for the bride with a red hat for her brother, Aimon, persuaded Alain that a Borgia son-in-law might have his charms. The marriage contract was signed on 10th May at Blois, and two days later the religious ceremony was performed. The King of France wrote with his own hand to announce the good news to Alexander, narrating the incidents of the nuptials with touches of Gallic humour that filled the apartments of His Holiness with the sounds of most unholy mirth.[1] In the political sphere the marriage had made its mark, for the Pope had become a declared partisan

[1] *Archivio della R. Società Romana di Storia Patria*, vol. xviii, p. 134, note; *Archivio Storico Lombardo*, 1914, p. 427; Burchard, *Diarium*, ed. Thuasne, vol. ii, p. 532. For Fleuranges' account of the circumstances in which Cesare had experienced 'une nuit de noces fort troublée', see his *Mémoires*, ch. iv.

of France. 'We are on the King's side', he said himself, 'because of the love he bears to our Duke.'[1]

From these gay scenes we may turn aside for one brief moment to follow the dark fortunes of the uncrowned Queen, who mourned whilst others feasted, and for whom the marriage bells had pealed in vain. Adjudged unfit to be a sovereign's consort, Jeanne de France was yet to show that she knew how to live as became the daughter of a King. Handsomely provided for by Louis' penitential generosity, she was now Duchess of Berry with an income of 30,000 *livres* a year; and she went to live in retirement at Bourges. There, in a town recently ravaged by a disastrous conflagration, she found what most she prized, an ample scope for her benevolence and piety. Administering her demesnes with care and equity, and living a life of ascetic self-denial, she devoted her resources to the furtherance of religion and the relief of distress. In many a destitute home in the stricken city her presence grew to be familiar, and the benedictions of the sick and suffering greeted the crippled form which had evoked the derision of Courts. Her beneficent activity pervaded the life of the town, and noble ladies to whom the world had been cruel came to her château from afar, to gain comfort from her gentle sympathy and inspiration from her high example. The neglected wife of Chaumont d'Amboise, that daughter whose hand Graville, the Admiral, had been proud to give to the Cardinal of Rouen's nephew, the lovely Charlotte d'Albret, whom Cesare Borgia had deserted, and Beatrix of Aragon, whom the King of Hungary had repudiated, came each in turn to confide their sorrows where a perfect comprehension was assured. Jeanne busied herself also in establishing a College, which afterwards became famous, and in founding a new religious House, the Order of the Annonciade, to honour the cardinal virtues most perfectly exemplified in the life of the Blessed Virgin. Then came serious illness, which her feeble constitution was powerless to resist, and on 4th February 1505 her gentle spirit passed away. After her death she became an object of local devotion, and miracles were worked in her name. Her tomb rifled by the Huguenots, and her château destroyed in the Revolution, her name yet lives in history's page, where, like

[1] Sanuto, *I Diarii*, vol. ii, col. 822.

the bruised petal of some delicate flower, it exhales the sweet fragrance of a saintly life.[1]

It will not be amiss, if we pause on the steps of the throne which Louis XII had mounted, to survey the new scene, and to ask what manner of man his subjects might look for in the Prince who was now to reign over them. It could not be said that there was much ground for optimism, when a youth of frivolity and licence had been succeeded by a manhood of turbulence and treason, and the dawn of his Royalty had been dimmed by the dark scandal of the divorce. The outcome, however, was to be vastly better than could reasonably have been predicted. Though a man may not change his nature in the prime of life, he may modify it in a new environment, and the enjoyment of power, unless it should appeal to what is bad in him, will call forth all that is best. So it was to be with Louis XII. As Duke and as King he was the same man, with the same virtues and the same defects; no miracle of swift regeneration was worked in him by the oil of consecration at Rheims; but whereas in the career of the Duke free play had been given to the faults, the virtues were to predominate in the life of the King.

Louis was still a young man at the time of his accession, being then not quite thirty-six years old, but he had lived hard, and already there were signs that he would age prematurely. He was often ill, and ambassadors resident at his Court paid anxious attention to a health precarious enough to be at the mercy of any trifling ailment. When indisposed, he was sometimes difficult, and, when crossed, he would occasionally sulk; but for the most part he was simple, kindly, and gay, accessible and tactful, eager to be liked, and studious not to give offence. His intelligence was mediocre, and his education had been neglected, but he liked to have artists and men of letters about him, possessed much common sense, and was imbued with a strong sentiment of duty. It has been said of him that he never regarded the King as an idol, but always strove to exalt above Royalty the great intellectual principles of which Royalty is the guardian and the instrument. If he did not consciously hold that Royalty exists to serve the people, he acted instinctively in conformity with such a belief. The most marked feature of his

[1] De Maulde-la-Clavière, *Jeanne de France*, pp. 367–483.

rule is its paternal character. He reduced taxation, reformed the laws, enforced justice, and promoted order and security. 'His desire to do good never failed,' says one historian.[1] 'The young libertine Prince became a moderate, humane King, devoted to his duties, an economical and vigilant custodian of the public wealth, a protector of order and justice, a just patron of merit and probity. Unhappily, he had little initiative and little breadth of mind, and his easy nature allowed too much influence to those whom he liked, though he often had the good sense, it is true, to place his affections well.' 'He had certain moral qualities', says another writer, 'such as moderation and humanity, except in war, when he would be harsh to the point of cruelty. . . . He was concerned for the public weal, possibly even preoccupied by the condition of the poor. In his second marriage with Anne of Brittany his private life was simple, domesticated, and dignified. His intellect, though superior to Charles VIII's, was not above the ordinary, and it was vitiated by deplorable weaknesses of character. He was always under some influence; in youth under that of obscure confidants, in manhood under that of his wife or of his friend, Georges d'Amboise. Nevertheless, he was very obstinate. Thus he met with some success, when confronted by questions which were simple or by enemies who were weak, because he allowed nothing to deflect him from the goal at which he aimed. But when once his plans and projects had taken shape, he could never change them or adapt himself to changing circumstances. He remained up to the end the man of whom it was said in 1498: "The Milanese question obsesses his mind."'[2]

From the beginning of the reign until close upon its end the influence of Anne of Brittany was very important. Louis was devoted to her, and found in his marriage with her an enduring happiness; if the fleeting vapours of some trifling disagreement would sometimes cross the sky, it was never darkened by the clouds of any real estrangement; nor did the breath of scandal ever touch the private life of the King and Queen. In her household, as in that of Anne de Beaujeu, the high-born damsels of the land were trained in the virtues

[1] Martin, *Histoire de France*, pp. 300–1.

[2] M. H. Lemonnier, *Histoire de France*, ed Lavisse, vol. v (i), p. 42.

and the graces, and with her intelligence, taste, and knowledge she set upon the Court of France the stamp of a refinement to which it would never have attained under the untutored guidance of her more *bourgeois* and less cultured lord. No small part of her considerable private fortune was expended in an intelligent patronage of art and letters and in the judicious acquisition of books, works of art, and sumptuous furniture. Her magnificence and generosity did something to counteract the unfavourable impression made by the economy of the King, who, in his desire to finance his Italian wars without burdening his subjects, had schooled his natural prodigality into a careful watchfulness, which passed for avarice among disappointed servants and courtiers. 'The King had the reputation among the soldiers of being close-fisted and over-eager to amass savings without rewarding the captains who had fought for him.'[1] The Queen, who spent and gave, was liked and admired the more.

From the point of view of the highest French interests, however, the many merits of Louis XII's Queen were outweighed by a few grave defects. She was imbued with the spirit of an aggressive provincialism, and in the sphere of foreign politics her influence would have been pernicious in the extreme, had not the King's patriotic instincts saved him in the end from a blind acquiescence in her schemes. Indifferent to the bright example of enlightened patriotism which she might have studied beyond the Pyrenees, she was always ready to sacrifice the unity of France to a selfish and short-sighted passion for the independence of Brittany. It was in this spirit that she had dictated the terms of her second marriage contract, with its numerous precautions for defeating French interests. In the same spirit she would pursue for years the project of marrying her daughter into the House of Austria and so preserving the independence of Brittany at the cost of dismembering a united France for the benefit of its most dangerous foe. The loyal service of La Trémoille counted for nothing with her against the bitter recollection of Breton humiliation, and Marshal de Gié was to find out with what a fury of vindictive hatred the Breton Queen could compass the ruin of an apostate Breton lord. There were also more innocent ways in which the tenacity

[1] D'Argentré, *Histoire de Bretagne*, fo. 808.

of her provincial feeling would manifest itself. She guarded jealously the independence of her administration in Brittany, with which Louis never ventured to interfere. In the separate Court which she maintained and in the separate audience which she gave to ambassadors she paraded the distinction between her ducal coronet and her regal crown. The Breton element predominated in her entourage. 'With her proud and exalted notions', says Brantôme, 'she wanted to have her own guards, and instituted a second band of a hundred gentlemen, for until then there was but one; and most of these guards were Bretons. Whenever she went abroad, to go to Mass or to take a walk, there were her Bretons always waiting for her on that little terrace at Blois which is still called by the name she herself gave it of the "Perche aux Bretons"; and as soon as she saw them, she would say: "There are my Bretons waiting for me on the Perch".'[1] Alas, that the busy mind in which the political conceptions of this twice crowned Queen of France took shape should likewise have been a Perche aux Bretons, where admission was denied to the guardian forces of a high political ideal!

Georges d'Amboise, who was the King's senior by two years, and had been his friend and confidant from early manhood, would now share in the good things of a prosperous future, as he had shared the misfortunes of a lean and troubled past. The son of a great seigneur, who had served as a Royal Chamberlain under two kings, Georges embraced the clerical career in which Court favour ensured rapid advancement, and was still a mere youth when appointed to the Bishopric of Montauban; he was then made Archbishop of Narbonne; and finally, when still only thirty-three, was translated to the Archbishopric of Rouen, one of the richest sees in France, with revenues amounting in modern money to some £15,000 a year. He had first won the affection of Louis by espousing his cause in the troubles of Charles VIII's minority, and after the death of Dunois in 1491 had become his sole confidant. As he was both prudent and adroit, his influence had been mainly good; he had, indeed, taken a hand in the attempt to remove the young King from his sister's control, and for that escapade he had been arrested

[1] Brantôme, *Œuvres*, vol. vii, p. 315; Dupuy, *Histoire de la Réunion de la Bretagne à la France*, vol. ii.

and put in prison; but he had generally counselled his friend more sagely; he had opposed his Breton adventure, and, when that adventure ended in a gaol, had contrived the prisoner's release. Along with his brother, the Bishop of Albi, another distinguished member of a family in which no less than four brothers attained episcopal rank, he had carried through the delicate business of the King's divorce. During the coming reign other servants of the Crown would play their part, such as Gui de Rochefort, the Chancellor, the Duke of Nemours and the Count of Ligny, Graville and Gié, La Trémoille and d'Aubigny, Étienne Poncher and Florimond Robertet; but none of them would ever threaten the supremacy of the old friend and favourite. So great was his intimacy with Louis and his Queen that 'he sometimes took a hand in the family squabbles, calming the choleric Queen or appeasing the sulky King. This position of go-between called for much dexterity, but it possessed the advantage that its occupant would become indispensable, if he could manage not to get himself disliked'.[1]

The writer of these words has also remarked that Cardinal d'Amboise, though he filled a rôle of the first importance, and for years took a leading part in all the business of the State, is even at the present day rather famous than well known. Asking what the nature of this rôle was, whether the Cardinal was a prime minister without the title or merely a much valued adviser, he does not venture to make a definite reply. The uncertainty may, perhaps, be due to the poverty of contemporary French sources; little light is shed upon such a matter by so dim a star as Jean d'Auton; and the brilliance of Commynes no longer illumines the scene. But when we find that the Italian envoys, habitually so quick in observation and so copious in report, tell us nothing about d'Amboise except that he was the power behind the throne, we begin to wonder whether the explanation is to be sought elsewhere. Can it be that the Cardinal was a rather colourless person, an official of unobtrusive worthiness, of whom in truth there was not much to say? Is it rash to assume that we should know more of him, had he been a Wolsey or a Richelieu? So far as we can discern his features, we perceive a man of many good qualities, but we never detect the magic

[1] M. H. Lemonnier, *Histoire de France*, ed. Lavisse, vol. v (i), p. 43.

touch of genius. Wise, tactful, honourable, and liberal, he was a trustworthy and painstaking adviser, dignified in his private life, zealous in the discharge of his public duties, with a liking for economy, law, and order, and a desire to promote them, but without the ability to devise, or the courage to apply, heroic remedies. In an age when the great were rarely scrupulous and benefices were cumulated shamelessly in high-born hands he set a fine example of moderation and self-restraint. In the use of the wealth which came to him he managed to be at once conscientious and magnificent, dividing the revenues of his see and his own private income into three portions, of which one was devoted to the poor, one was allotted to the maintenance and reconstruction of buildings in his diocese, and one only was reserved for his own personal expenditure.[1] He had been tried for a decade in high station, when a Venetian ambassador was moved to testify to his consistent generosity: 'the Cardinal', he wrote, 'draws an income of 10,000 ducats from his diocese, and spends the whole of it there on the poor and in other ways, so that he is greatly beloved'.[2] His tastes were splendid, and although as a builder he had many imitators, from the King downwards, his magnificent château of Gaillon set a standard to which none ever approached. Personally simple, agreeable, and unassuming, he was popular in all societies, and when he went to Rome as a candidate for the tiara, a hostile witness had to admit that he was 'in favour with all men, having shown himself to be more pleasant and easy than could have been expected in one who is both a great seigneur and a Frenchman'.[3] His worst fault was an inordinate ambition, and the foreign policy of France would frequently be deflected to subserve his restless pursuit of the Triple Crown.

Readers of Michelet's great prose epic may, perhaps, recall a characteristic passage,[4] in which, with much eloquence, but not with much sympathy, the historian introduces the figure of Louis XII's famous minister. 'Over and over again I have seen the effigies of the Cardinal and his nephew on their tomb at Rouen: they are excellent portraits, pitilessly

[1] De Maulde-la-Clavière, *Histoire de Louis XII*, part i.
[2] Sanuto, *I Diarii*, vol. vii, col. 235.
[3] Machiavelli, *Opere*, vol. iv, p. 446.
[4] Michelet, *Histoire de France*, vol. ix, pp. 213–17.

life-like. You would say that you were looking at thick-set Norman peasants, and would be ready to swear that the broad faces and heavy drooping eyebrows indicated a race of *parvenus* who had climbed rapidly by stolid finesse, hard work, and an accommodating conscience. But you would be wrong. These men are nobles of the Loire district. Curious phenomenon! Whilst the *bourgeois* were trying to get ennobled, these born patricians changed their status in quest of fortune, and became *bourgeois*. The Crown was too suspicious of the nobility; to reassure and please, the first condition was to become simple, gross in person and manner, *pauvres gens*, *bonnes gens*. And the second condition of success was to take orders, to stamp yourself a man who would have no children, found no House, and want nothing in this world but a modest competence.

'Acting instinctively from avarice and greed, d'Amboise fitted in perfectly with the great movement of the time, which had been going on since Louis XI's day, the astonishing rise of the *bourgeoisie*, or, rather, of two *bourgeoisies*, the one composed of the magistracy and the revenue officials, the other made up of the merchants, manufacturers, and shopkeepers. Here was a phenomenon none could miss, for everywhere houses were being built and shops opened. D'Amboise was clever enough to see it and to see what lay beneath it, namely, a profound egoism and an astonishing indifference to the reputation of France and to her interests abroad. What did these people want? One thing only, a proper handling of the numerous lawsuits to which a multiplicity of new interests everywhere gave rise. D'Amboise satisfied them in this by means of Louis XI's old Chancellor, Rochefort, an able man, who reformed the Parlements, codified the customary law, and conferred a real benefit by creating a fiscal magistracy to examine Treasury accounts on the one hand, and, on the other, to hear cases between the Treasury and the taxpayer. As for the rest, the Cardinal knew well that the shopkeeper had no ideals, would be easily pleased, and, if necessary, would put up with disgrace and even tolerate crime. With him began the inauguration in Europe of *bourgeois* government and a commercial policy. . . .

'When it begins, the reign is monstrously discordant: at home, justice, order, economy, a policy of wise reform;

abroad, injustice, treachery, shame, a cynical partnership between France and the Borgias.

'Judicial reform is taken in hand in the great ordinance of Blois. Judicial offices are no longer to be sold; the honour of the Parlement and its purity are assured; there are to be no more presents to judges and no more partial judgements dictated by family interest. Justice is to be itself just, and is to be punished or imprisoned, when it punishes improperly or arrests without cause. The seneschals are to be lawyers or are to employ lawyers. Seigneurs are no longer to exact from their subjects aught but their acknowledged dues. At least one in three of all vacant benefices is to go to a University graduate. Moreover, there are a few surprisingly humane touches. Torture, though not abolished, is never to be applied twice. Even the beggar and the vagabond, in whom the law had never seen anything but gaol-birds and fodder for the hangman's rope, begin to get treated as human beings and receive certain sanctions; *baillis* and seneschals are not to sit in judgement on them without judicial assessors, even if these assessors be only local practitioners.

'These fine reforms were matched by that of the Court and Royal Household. After the scandalous irregularities of Charles VIII's Court the Household of Louis XII and Anne of Brittany was order itself. Surrounded by sober matrons and austere damsels, who sat at their spinning or embroidery all the day long, the Queen presided over a school of wisdom. . . . Despite her preoccupation with things Breton, Anne did not the less take an interest in the affairs of France. Every one was aware of it. The first care of foreign ambassadors was to make sure of the two real kings, the Queen and the Cardinal. When once Anne and d'Amboise were on their side, they need fear no opposition from Louis XII.'

In Sanuto's *Diaries*, that marvellous treasure-house of information which the insatiable curiosity and unwearied industry of the Venetian senator filled with correspondence, dispatches, reports, and the news and gossip of half the world, there is an interesting picture of the French Court, as the ambassadors of the Signory portrayed it on the morrow of Louis' marriage.[1] The ambassadors were Zorzi, Michiel,

[1] The account in the *Diarii*, vol. ii, cols. 749–51 and 762–8, is in three parts: the ambassador's report to the Signory, a private conversation with

and Loredan; and their mission was to negotiate the alliance for a joint conquest of Milan, which will form the subject of my next chapter. Notwithstanding a gratifying diplomatic success, they went home with little liking for the French, whom they thought arrogant and unreliable, and among whom they had made no friendships; even Zorzi, after several visits, had not a man in the country whom he could call a friend. At the hands of the greater nobility they had not always experienced even a decent civility. When the Duke of Bourbon came to Court, and the ambassadors went to call upon him, they found him seated at table with a companion; the companion rose to greet the ambassadors, but the Duke did not stir. The Duchess treated them in the same cavalier fashion. They found that the most important people about the Court were Cardinal d'Amboise, the Chancellor, Marshal de Gié, the Count of Ligny, and the Duke of Lorraine. D'Amboise was all-powerful with the King; he had seven brothers, and the Bishop of Albi was one of them. The Count of Ligny was thirty years of age, devotedly attached to the King, and very well disposed towards Venice. The Duke of Lorraine, who was called King of Sicily, and not Duke of Lorraine, was also friendly to the Signory. He wished to recover Provence, but the King kept putting him off with fair words. He and Ligny were the only friends upon whom Venice could count in the Court, where she was opposed by the Cardinal of Rouen, by the Chancellor, who was the second most important person in the King's entourage, and by Marshal de Gié. Commynes was a good friend to the Signory, but he was not in favour with the new King, because he was believed to have disapproved of the marriage with the Duchess of Brittany, and to have tried to dissuade the lords from attending the coronation.

Signor Ludovic of Milan had many partisans in France, such as the Duke of Bourbon and Madame de Beaujeu (his wife), Marshal de Gié, the Cardinal of Saint-Malo, and many others, and these persons had contrived that the present King, at that time Duke of Orleans, should be on bad terms with the late King, Charles. Charles was bent on getting Naples, and hated Venice for thwarting his designs and rob-

Sanuto, and the official *Relazione* of Hieronimo Zorzi. The three accounts are fused in my text.

bing him of his prize. In those days Monseigneur de Rouen was under restraint, and Louis, who lived at Blois, in the Orleans appanage, where he was born, would have been shut up too, if Charles had lived. In truth, Charles' sudden death was a great stroke of luck for him in every way, because Charles' advisers intended to get him to make a will depriving Louis of the succession, and in that event he would not have succeeded as peaceably as in fact he had done. As things turned out, everybody ran off to Blois, when Charles died, to render obedience to Louis; and within a week the Duke of Bourbon himself waited upon him. Ludovic, who desired above all things to prevent Louis' peaceable accession, had written a letter to Bourbon, and this letter Bourbon showed to the new King. Louis asked that he might be permitted to keep it, and it was the cause of his bitter animosity against the Duke of Milan.

The King was thirty-six years of age, good-looking, rather tall, of pleasing appearance with a large face and nose, gracious and kindly, and of a merry disposition. He was an accomplished athlete, could endure great fatigue, and nearly every day went hunting or hawking, pursuits from which he derived great amusement, and in which he would run no small risk. He was addressed as 'Sire', took his meals at a table by himself, and was supposed to be proud; but he granted audiences to all and sundry. Prudent and wise, he managed his affairs well, was able to conceal his thoughts and intentions, and knew his own mind. Whereas Charles was extravagant, this King was economical and careful of his money, wanted his government to be solvent and his troops to be paid punctually,[1] did not live sumptuously or incur any great expense in his Court, and usually dressed in black velvet. He never left the Queen. The Queen dressed in silk, spent a good deal on her Household, was a prudent lady, and liked to see the King neatly turned out.[2] She had no preten-

[1] 'Vol che li danari siano dati per sua poliza, et vol sia pagate le zente d' arme': Sanuto, *I Diarii*, vol. ii, col. 749.

[2] Compare the *relazione* of Domenico Trevisan, October 1st, 1502 (Sanuto, *I Diarii*, vol. iv, cols. 332–3): 'The King is forty, tall and thin, but well conditioned; he is abstemious, and almost invariably eats boiled meat; he is avaricious and niggardly; he takes great pleasure in falconry, a sport which he follows from September till April, when he goes hunting; he is pacific; no one has much influence with him, because in King Charles' time

sions to good looks. Madame Jeanne, the King's former wife, a sister of King Charles, lived at Bourges, which the King had made over to her with an annuity of 30,000 francs; she was excessively plain. King Federigo's daughter, who refused to marry the Pope's son, and was in love with a Breton gentleman, lived with the Queen. She, too, was no beauty.

Government was carried on through the Council, though as a matter of fact that body always did what the King desired. Aware of the importance of efficient justice and sound finance, the King aimed at improving the judicial and fiscal systems. He had therefore sent for some members of the Parlement of Paris, the supreme civil and criminal tribunal, and had given them certain instructions, which had led to many improvements. Whereas in the past the interminable length of judicial proceedings used to cause great discontent, now cases were disposed of rapidly, and litigants came away satisfied. Similarly, in the fiscal sphere he had adopted the plan of making a budget, that is to say, he would call together all the experts of the kingdom, and after they had framed estimates of revenue and expenditure, he would settle how much would be required and impose the necessary taxes.[1] Taxation was no greater than in King Charles' time; indeed, it had been reduced by 300,000 *écus* a year, many pensions having been discontinued. The King asserted that, whatever people might say, his revenue did not exceed the official figures, because France was a free country, and the receipts from Brittany, which belonged to the Queen, amounted to no more than 360,000 *écus*. In that Duchy more than five hundred gentle families derived their living from posts about the Court, and there were besides many others with Court pensions and allowances. The Bretons had not approved of the Duchess' marriage with the King, because they had wanted a Duke who would live in the Duchy.

the courtiers were given too much influence. . . . The King dislikes affairs, and the Cardinal of Rouen does all the business, with the King's knowledge. The King is parsimonious; he has an income of 150,000 ducats, gets 160,000 ducats from the *gabelles*, and 1,170,000 ducats from the taxes; however, these last are collected with difficulty, because the people are overburdened. The Queen is liberal and sensible, and spends her income well.'

[1] 'À danari, fece il stado, el qual stado, è far vegnir tutti li homeni pratici dil regno, che fanno quasi uno bilanzom de la intrada et de la spesa, et poi scansa quello li par, et pone angarie': Sanuto, *I Diarii*, vol. ii, col. 763.

The practice was to impose two taxes a year. These taxes were not paid by any Churchman, although a third of the income of the country was in the hands of the Church; nor were they paid by any person about the Court or even by any seigneur, whilst, in addition, exemption from the *gabelle* was enjoyed by many districts, such as Paris, Rouen, and Bordeaux. The result was that the taxes were paid only by merchants and peasants, and they, being poor, had difficulty in meeting their obligations. The yield of the two taxes was about 450,000 *écus*. They were first imposed in the time of King Charles VII, who was almost turned out of his kingdom by the English. With this money the King paid his troops, which now included 2,200 lances and 200 nobles, the lance consisting of six horses and comprising two archers; the pay was 14 *écus* for each man-at-arms, and was given in four quarterly payments; and these payments consumed the whole product of these taxes. The King had given strict orders, under pain of death for disobedience, that the troops should live on their pay, and that the officers should not rob the men, nor the men prey on the people. The troops were under an obligation to serve abroad at the ordinary rate of pay, and might be sent to India without getting more. The King assigned men to the officers, and did not permit them to do their own recruiting. With the balance of his revenue he paid the Parlements and judicial officers, and for that purpose required 600,000 *écus*. France was a great country, and his ordinary revenue amounted to 1,150,000 ducats, without counting the yield of the taxes which could be imposed at pleasure.

On his accession the new King's first object was to secure peace with his neighbours. First, he made peace with Spain, whose ambassadors were in France, when Charles died; and his relations with that country continued to be friendly, though he kept no embassy there. Then he renewed the peace with England, and confirmed that with the Archduke. With Maximilian, King of the Romans, he was on bad terms, though there was a truce between them for the time being. He had a very poor opinion of him, saying that he made promises one day, and broke them the next. Louis had sent help in money and in men to the Duke of Guelders against Maximilian, and had also given aid to the Swiss, to the end

that Maximilian, occupied in those hostilities, might be unable to oppose the Milanese enterprise. He was very hostile to Ludovic, thought of nothing but of driving him out, and would give ten years of life to effect his ruin. Naples he did not trouble about; nor would the Queen hear of an attack on that country, declaring that the place was a slaughter-house for Frenchmen. The King was accustomed to refer to Federigo of Naples as Don Federigo, not as King Federigo, and to speak of Ludovic of Milan as Signor Ludovic, not as the Duke of Milan. Madame Bona, the widow of Duke Galeazzo of Milan, who lived at Lyons, had lost the allowance of 6,000 *écus* which she enjoyed in King Charles' time, for the Queen had stopped payment of the half which came from Brittany, and the King had discontinued the other half. The King had obtained financial assistance from bankers in Genoa, and looked for a revolution in that city. When two ambassadors from Genoa were received by him in audience, Cardinal della Rovere being present, and said that they represented the ruler of Genoa, the Cardinal of Rouen asked them: 'Who is this ruler, for whom you speak?' They replied: 'The Duke of Milan.' 'Then you had better take your leave', answered the Cardinal; 'and when you come on behalf of the King's friends, His Majesty will hear you.' All subjects of Milan had been expelled by Royal decree, and the King thought of nothing but the conquest of that Duchy.

The King, who received many dispatches from Italy, and knew all that went on there, had a high opinion of Venice, and thought much more highly of her than of the Pope and his son or of Florence. Venice was not popular in France, but the Signory enjoyed a reputation for good government and great prudence, and Venice was believed to be much wealthier than any other Italian power. The King wanted a financial contribution from her, in order that he might act on a suggestion which had been made to him, and represent to his subjects that it was not with their money that he was making war in Italy. The detractors of Venice maintained that she would not be true to her engagements, but the King did not believe them, and the Neapolitan refugees, partisans of the Republic, assured him that Venice might be difficult to bring to terms, but, when once she had given her word, observed it with scrupulous fidelity. The general opinion

was that the Signory knew very well what it was about, felt assured that France could not maintain herself in Italy, and looked forward to the time when the flag of St. Mark would float over the King's Italian possessions. Thus the King's Italian policy was generally condemned, and by none more strongly than by the Queen; but the King was set upon it, and meant to see it through. His last words, when the Venetian ambassadors took leave of him, were these: 'We've got the men for Milan, and we've got the money too.'[1]

[1] 'Havemo li danari e le zente per l' impresa de Milan': Sanuto, *I Diarii*, vol. ii, col. 751.

XVII

LOUIS XII AND LUDOVIC SFORZA

Like the Angevin claim to Naples, the Orleanist claim to Milan was of very doubtful validity, but Louis XII, like Charles VIII, was firmly persuaded of the justice of his pretensions. Nor does the resemblance between the claims end here, for there is another respect in which they are alike; each must be understood, if the events resulting from it are to be seen in true perspective; and he who would understand must submit to the tedium of an unexciting examination.[1]

To investigate the Orleanist claim to Milan, we must retrace our steps for about a hundred and fifty years. In the middle of the fourteenth century the Duchy of Milan, an Imperial fief, was held by the family of Visconti, who had driven out the Guelfs some eighty years before; and the heads of the Visconti family at that time were Bernabò, who ruled in the city of Milan, and his brother, Galeazzo, who ruled in Pavia. Galeazzo had a son and a daughter; the daughter he married into the Royal House of England, and then in 1360 secured for the son, Gian Galeazzo, the hand of a daughter of France. Gian Galeazzo, not less enterprising than his father, got himself created Imperial Vicar of the Milanese in 1372, then, having captured Bernabò and driven out his family, established himself as the sole ruler of the Visconti possessions, and in 1395 induced the Emperor to accept the *fait accompli* and grant him an investiture of the whole Duchy. By his marriage with the French Princess he had a daughter, Valentine, born in 1366, and three sons, who died in childhood. In addition to a natural son, Gabriello, he had by a second marriage two other legitimate sons, of whom one was assassinated, and the other, Filippo Maria, succeeded him in the Dukedom. The only child of Filippo Maria was an illegitimate daughter, Bianca, whose hand was bestowed upon the *condottiere* leader, Francesco Sforza; neither of his brothers, the legitimate or the illegitimate,

[1] For this see A. M. F. Robinson, 'The Claims of the House of Orleans to Milan,' in the *English Historical Review*, vol. iii (1888); L. G. Pélissier, *Louis XII et Ludovic Sforza*, vol. i; Delaborde, *L'Expédition de Charles VIII en Italie*.

had left issue; and after Filippo's death Valentine and her issue would thus become the only lawful descendants of Gian Galeazzo.

Valentine Visconti was betrothed by her father in 1387 to Louis of France, afterwards Duke of Orleans, the second son of Charles V, and was married to him in 1389. A dispensation, necessary because Louis and Valentine were cousins, was granted by the anti-Pope, Clement, and was accompanied by a transfer of Asti as the bride's dower and by a declaration of her right of succession to her father in the Milanese in the event of a failure of his male issue. The efficacy of the declaration was doubtful in view of the fact that at the time Gian Galeazzo, though ruling in Milan as *de facto* despot, was without any legal title to the Duchy. That defect he afterwards set himself to remedy, obtaining from the Emperor in rapid succession three investitures, of which the terms varied with his varying relations with France, and were mutually inconsistent. At the time of the first investiture, granted in 1395, he was friendly with France, and this investiture, which contained a general limitation in favour of him and his heirs and successors, was intended to secure for Valentine and her issue the rights of succession upon which her marriage settlement had purported to operate. Shortly afterwards, however, France acquired Genoa by a voluntary cession, of which a French writer has said that it 'indicates the moment when our Kings, gradually drawn on by a sort of political gravitation, became mixed up personally in the affairs of the peninsula';[1] and in 1396 Gian Galeazzo, estranged from his former friend by her policy in Genoa and apprehensive of a war, obtained a second investiture, which expressly limited the succession to the male line. A year later he wished once again to draw near to France, and he then obtained a third grant, which restored the original general limitation. There was certainly some ambiguity, and of this the cunning Duke could avail himself. He could plead Italian custom and female succession to prevent the fief reverting to the Empire; or German law and military tenure to prevent too big an increase in the power of France. The position was that the Papal contract was in favour of Orleans; the second investiture was absolutely against them; the first

[1] Delaborde, *L'Expédition de Charles VIII en Italie*, p. 27.

and the third investitures were differently construed on different sides of the Alps.[1]

That the ambiguity was an effect at which Gian Galeazzo had aimed deliberately, and was no mere casual by-product of political opportunism, was made fairly plain by the nature of his testamentary dispositions. He left three wills. The first made no mention of Valentine. The second, in effect, confirmed the settlement made upon her marriage. The third expressly provided that, if the testator's sons should die without leaving male issue, then one of Valentine's sons should succeed to Milan. The existence of this third will was not known to contemporaries. Discovered many years afterwards by one of Ludovic's officials, it was instantly suppressed by that ruler, who ordered that all copies should be sought for and destroyed; but he omitted to destroy the letter in which the discovery had been reported to him, and it is through this letter that posterity has become acquainted with the existence and the nature of the will.

Gian Galeazzo was succeeded by his son, Filippo Maria, who ruled in Milan from 1402 until his death in 1447. During his reign Asti was taken back from its Orleanist masters, who had been captured in the English wars and languished in foreign dungeons. When at length they returned to France, they demanded the restitution of their property; but the Duke in the meantime had established Francesco Sforza in Asti, and dared not offend his forceful son-in-law by complying with the request. Estranged from his Orleanist relatives by this dispute, he sought a connexion with the future Louis XI, who as Dauphin was on the worst terms with his father, the French King, and with that King's Government; and the relations between them became so cordial that rumour soon credited him with the intention of making Louis his heir. Under the pressure of this danger the House of Orleans again bestirred itself about Asti, which Filippo Maria was obliged ultimately to restore. He had formed other relationships of potential importance in the disposal of his inheritance. He had married a Savoyard Princess, and in contracting that union he had undertaken that in default of issue he would devise his Duchy to the House of Savoy. Another relationship resulted from a curious

[1] *English Historical Review*, vol. iii, pp. 40–1.

incident which had marked his quarrel with Naples. While that dispute was in progress, Alfonso the Magnanimous of Naples was taken prisoner by the Genoese and handed over to Filippo Maria. Succumbing to the charm of a fascinating personality, Alfonso's gaoler changed suddenly from enmity to ardent friendship, set the captive free, and restored him to his throne.

In these circumstances no one could tell what would become of Milan upon Filippo Maria's death. On 13th August 1447 the event came to pass. 'Above the corpse, scarcely yet cold, the rival heirs, in eager expectation, gathered to the reading of the will. The duchess-dowager represented Savoy; Madonna Bianca appeared for the absent Sforza; Raynouard du Dresnay came to Milan on behalf of Orleans; while, at a distance, Montferrat and Jacopo Visconti looked to their own interests; the Venetians had hopes of their own; the Milanese, as we know, intended to inaugurate a republic; the emperor, serene above these petty quarrels, declared that by feudal law Milan had already devolved on him. Absent or present, there was not one of these, save him, but had some promise of Filippo Maria's in his mind when at length the testament was opened. The will was dated 12th August, the day before the death of the Duke. There was no mention in it of his daughter, Madonna Bianca, none of his wife, none of any of his nephews or kinsmen. He left Alfonso of Arragon his universal heir.'[1] Alfonso was not at hand; Orleans was still more remote, and had no army with which to enforce his claim; Savoy remained inert; and Milan declared itself a free Republic. It was, however, shown by the event to be unfit for freedom. Overtaken by discord and famine, and in grave peril from Venetian ambition, the city sought a saviour in Francesco Sforza, whom in February 1450 it welcomed with acclamation as its lord. The new Duke was able to consolidate his position, and to hand down his throne to his eldest son, Galeazzo Maria, and to that son's son, Gian Galeazzo, for whom Ludovic had been Regent. It was upon Gian Galeazzo's death that Ludovic, armed with an Imperial investiture, had seized the throne.

Such were the facts: what in the light of them is to be thought of the Orleanist claim?

[1] *English Historical Review*, vol. iii, p. 49.

To answer this question, we must first determine by what law the succession in Milan was governed. Feudal law recognized two classes of fief; there was the fief held by military tenure, evidenced by homage of a banner, and confined by its nature to masculine succession; and there was the fief in which, the strictness of the feudal law being modified by local custom, the succession of females was admitted in default of male heirs. It is difficult to say to which class Milan belonged. The Emperor, who was its suzerain, regarded the Duchy as a military fief, refusing to admit that Gian Galeazzo Visconti's purchase of an investiture in 1395, large though the price of a hundred thousand florins had been, had sufficed to secure the wider privileges which comprised a right of female succession. In Italy, on the other hand, female succession was generally recognized in theory, though in practice the lack of any distinction between legitimacy and illegitimacy and the prevalence of bastards made it of infrequent occurrence. Nor was this the only difficulty. Supposing that female rights of succession to Milan were admitted, a further question would arise. At the time of Valentine's marriage her father was, indeed, in actual possession of the Duchy, which he had fraudulently seized, but as he himself had no legal title, he necessarily lacked the capacity to confer any rights of succession upon his issue; and the subsequent regularization of his position by the investiture of 1395 seemed powerless to remedy the inherent inefficacy of the previous contract. Nor was it by any means certain that he had been competent to circumvent that objection by a subsequent will, for the power of testamentary disposition over fiefs was as variable and uncertain as female succession itself; and even if he possessed the power, it was none too clear, having regard to the three wills, that he had effectually exercised it in Valentine's favour. 'Thus it may be seen in how deep an obscurity the origin of the rights of Valentine Visconti and her children to the Duchy of Milan is enveloped. Theoretically, those rights rested upon the exercise by Gian Galeazzo Visconti of powers which he possessed abusively and upon the exercise by Valentine of rights which custom alone conferred upon her; actually, they rested upon acts which were illegal and irregular, or contradictory and equivocal. The efficacy of the contract and the validity of the testaments are

doubtful; two of the investitures conflict with the third; and the investitures by their silence abrogate the provisions of the contract, which the testaments do not clearly affirm. Nothing could have been more vague or inconsistent than the basis of the Orleanist pretensions to the Visconti inheritance.'[1] Such is the verdict of one who speaks with the authority bestowed by a life of unwearied industry devoted to the study of Louis XII's relations with Italy, and of whom it may certainly be said that in the main he is a warm champion of the King. Whatever the precise value of his rights, however, Louis had been brought up with a firm belief in them; and he felt that the title of Ludovic, which, though regularized by an Imperial investiture, in fact rested upon a double usurpation, could claim no moral superiority over his own. Repressed by Louis XI, at enmity with the Beaujeus, and unsupported by Charles VIII, Louis had never yet found himself in a position to press his claim; but now the opportunity had come, for the heir to the right of Orleans had become master of the might of France.

The conquest of Milan was not an enterprise to be undertaken lightly or unadvisedly, and besides providing himself with resources in money and in men Louis must first adjust his international relationships to withstand the pressure of the impending strain. At the time of his accession the political situation of France was not altogether satisfactory, but it was far from being as unfavourable as his panegyrists are wont to represent it. The League of Venice was already moribund, when the King, by whose ambition it had been called into being, passed from the political stage; and no student of the history of alliances will feel surprise that its most enduring effect should be the engendering of bitter hatreds among the members of the confederacy. Ludovic was detested by the allies whom he had deserted in the treaty of Vercelli, and with an especial intensity by the Venetians, whom in that compact he had especially wronged; he was looked coldly upon by Maximilian for the lack of zeal which he had displayed during that ruler's ignominious incursion into Italy; and he was distrusted by the Pope. The Pope, after quarrelling with his Orsini neighbours, had begun to

[1] L. G. Pélissier, *Louis XII et Ludovic Sforza*, vol. i, p. 85.

alarm Venice by his designs on Romagna, had estranged Florence by his treatment of Savonarola, and was making secret advances to Charles VIII. A blow as sharp and as treacherous as Ludovic's had been dealt to the League by Ferdinand of Spain, when he made a truce with France behind the backs of his allies, and approached the common enemy with secret proposals for a partition of Naples. The King of England, though he had joined the League, had never meant to take an active part in furthering its aims; he was on bad terms with Maximilian; and the payment of French indemnities and the possibilities of French trade touched him much more closely than any problem of Italian politics. In Scotland, France had an old and trusted friend. In Florence she had an ally who at no small hazard had held aloof from the confederacy which all her neighbours had joined. In Savoy, Montferrat, and Saluzzo, France had satellites which always revolved in the orbit of her policy. If Charles had lived, and had returned to Italy to enforce his claims, there would have been few to object, and fewer still to oppose. To secure a general acquiescence, when the new King should march across the Alps with a similar end in view, was now the object of France; and the attainment of that object seemed unlikely to make any exceptional demands upon the resources of French diplomacy.

Louis began with England, for it was essential that he should be assured of the neutrality of that country, lest, when committed in Milan, he should be attacked in rear upon his Channel coasts. The dispatch of a herald to England, to notify his accession and to give evidence of his friendly disposition, was one of his first acts. The immediate response was disappointing, Henry VII maintaining an attitude of detachment and reserve. Amid all the perilous possibilities of European politics, said an observer,[1] His Majesty of England was like one who can stand on the top of a tower and look down on what is passing in the plain. In the foreground of the scene his gaze rested on features which he liked but little: there was the spectacle of Franco-Scottish friendship, distasteful to him as to every English sovereign: and over the Breton border there hung the shadow of a fresh danger to that independence which England once

[1] *Calendar of State Papers, Milan*, vol. i, p. 364.

already had taken up arms to defend. Against the more distant background of general European politics, however, the figure of the new King of France stood out in a more becoming light. It was all very well for the Catholic sovereigns to assert that 'it would be a good thing to lower the pretensions of the King of France, which it would not be difficult to do, if Spain, England, and the King of the Romans were to combine for that purpose';[1] but of this Henry was not so sure. He had seen 'that the whole Christian world combined could scarcely resist the King of France',[2] and the prospect of an alliance with Maximilian did little to remove his doubts, since he regarded Maximilian as an ally to be trusted even less than those Italians, of whom he said that their constant endeavour was to divert war from their own country to the countries of their friends. Whilst he thus distrusted the King of the Romans, he thought well of the new French sovereign, valuing him personally much above his predecessor, and cherishing memories of bygone days, when they had united to defend Brittany against the encroachments of France.[3] He knew well enough what Louis meant to attempt in Italy, but he did not believe in the practicability of his projects; and he thought that, even if Louis should become master of Italy, he would be so distracted in ruling it that no harm would ensue to the King of England or his heirs.[4] He therefore concurred in the opinion generally held by his subjects that it would be better not to arouse suspicion in the French, unless they should first see everything upside down.[5] The prospect of disturbance faded rapidly away with the news from the Continent, which told of peace offers from Spain to France, of friendly negotiations between Louis and the Archduke, and of a close alliance between France and Rome. Henry could not but feel flattered and relieved, when courted by a monarch for whose friendship the powers were contending; and the chill reserve with which he had received the first French overtures melted in the warmth of a genuine satisfaction, when a near and powerful neighbour solicited the renewal of former treaties, offered payment of the old tribute and pensions, and, in his

[1] *Calendar of State Papers, Spain*, vol. i, p. 167.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 188.
[3] *Calendar of State Papers, Milan*, vol. i, p. 359.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 364.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 357.

desire to please, actually held out hopes that the alliance with Scotland might be given up. Henry, wrote the Spanish ambassador, had come to esteem the friendship of Louis more than the whole of the Indies.[1]

The consequences of this altered temper were soon plain to see. In June Ludovic sent Raimondo di Soncino back to the English Court, in which not long before he had filled an honoured place. After explaining to Henry that the King of France had no right to the title of Duke of Milan, which he and his ancestors had usurped, Raimondo was to suggest a betrothal of the heir of Milan to Princess Mary and the bestowal of the Garter upon Ludovic. For six weeks the envoy of Milan was left to dangle his heels in the Royal antechambers, for no reason except the English fear of offending France, and when at last he was received in audience, his reception was markedly less gracious than on the occasion of his previous embassy. Raimondo attributed the change in Henry's attitude to his liking for French gold, to the policy of Spain, and to the state of Italian politics, much altered by the dispute between Ludovic and Venice over Pisa and by the league between the Pope and the French, which, Henry believed, must result in an actual breach between Milan and Venice. As the King of England did not mean to support Ludovic and did not want to annoy the French, he refused Mary's hand on the ground that she was too young to be betrothed, and declined to confer the Garter because the statutes of the Order required that succour should be given to any member who was attacked, and this could not at the moment conveniently be done for the Duke of Milan. Meanwhile Henry's ambassadors, who had been sent to France in May, had agreed on 14th July to a renewal of the treaty of Étaples, with no change except for a strengthening of the article relating to rebels; and in August this agreement had been followed by the signature of a commercial treaty. Louis might be sure that he would have nothing to fear from England, when he should cross the Alps.

Beyond the Pyrenees he had done nearly as well. In the minds of the Spanish sovereigns his accession had at first produced an uncertainty which was reflected in the hesitancy

[1] *Calendar of State Papers, Spain*, vol. i, p. 188.

of their diplomatic action. It was long since the relations between France and Spain had been cordial; to the quarrel over Roussillon and Cerdagne and the enduring struggle for a sphere of influence in Navarre recent events in Naples had imparted a new bitterness; and Ferdinand viewed with disquiet and disgust the prospect of his most formidable rival establishing himself in Italy by a successful attack on Milan. But these hostile feelings were held in check by Ferdinand's habitual caution. He knew that the League of Venice, that refreshing fruit of cunning selfishness, was rotten to the core. If there was to be a conflagration in Italy, he was not going to burn his fingers in any solitary attempt to quench the flames. He had entered the League, said a Venetian ambassador, to protect himself against France with Italian money, and, Spaniards being more ready with words than with deeds, Italy need look for no help from him which words could not give.[1] His ambassadors at the French Court, who had been negotiating with Charles, were therefore left without instructions, until he should see how events might shape themselves. In May he was asked by his Italian allies to arrange a general truce, in which Federigo of Naples should be included, and this proposal led to the dispatch of a new embassy, which reached the French Court in June. For a time all went well, but Louis was adamant on the question of a recognition of Federigo, and in the middle of July the ambassadors took their leave. On both sides, however, there was a genuine desire to avoid a breach: Louis must secure himself against a Spanish attack, and Ferdinand knew by now what was being done by the King of England, the Archduke, and the Pope. On the pretext of going on a hunting expedition Louis rode after the departing ambassadors, and in a secret interview, in which the idea of partitioning Naples may not improbably have been revived, induced them to return. The negotiations then progressed smoothly, and a treaty between Louis and the Catholic sovereigns was signed at Marcoussis on 5th August. The subjects with which it dealt were the removal of all causes of friction, the establishment of perpetual peace and friendship between the signatories, promises of mutual help in the event of attack, leave for the subjects of each to trade in the countries of the other,

[1] Sanuto, *I Diarii*, vol. i, col. 987.

and restitution or indemnities for all who had suffered losses in the late wars. No mention was made of Ludovic, of Federigo, or of the Pope.[1]

In the House of Austria a less accommodating temper was to be expected, for the old quarrel over the Burgundian inheritance had merely been patched up for a time by the treaty of Senlis, and the policy of Maximilian, the head of the House, had always been shaped by his inveterate hostility to France. That he should modify that policy in regard to the Milanese question was the less probable, seeing that he had confirmed the title, and then married the niece, of the man whom Louis purposed to evict; and in fact, when Louis acceded to the throne, Maximilian's thoughts were all of war. He was away in the mountains, hunting chamois, when the tidings of Charles VIII's death reached his Court, and the news was taken to him by Herasmo Brasca, the able and energetic ambassador of Milan. 'Now is the time', said Brasca, 'to let the chamois be, and perform deeds worthy of your position.'[2] Nothing loath to follow such counsel, Maximilian summoned his captains, prepared to invade Burgundy, and began to intrigue in France, where he looked for a disputed succession, resulting in general turmoil. He supposed that the accession of Louis must be unacceptable to the Beaujeus and to Admiral de Graville, who had defeated him and locked him up, to the Duke of Lorraine, who claimed Provence, and to Anne of Brittany, Orange, and Rohan, who desired Breton independence; and his plan was to join hands with these and other domestic opponents of the new sovereign and resuscitate the feudal league.[3] Variable though he was in many things, his loathing for the French was unchanging. The new King had not been long on the throne when one evening after dinner Maximilian called his nobles together, and addressed them at great length and with remarkable violence. Resuming the history of his relations with France, he expatiated on the many acts of treachery with which he reproached her rulers, and rehearsed all the

[1] Dumont, *Corps diplomatique*, vol. iii, part ii, pp. 397–400.

[2] L. G. Pélissier, 'L'Alliance Milano-Allemande à la fin du xv^e siècle. L'ambassade d'Herasmo Brasca à la cour de l'Empereur Maximilien (avril–décembre 1498),' *Miscellanea di Storia Italiana*, vol. xxxv, p. 339.

[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 337–43.

items in a long catalogue of injuries. After destroying all the barons and powerful lords in their own country, these men had then attempted the conquest of Italy, had occupied Naples without a vestige of right, had sacked and burned places which had surrendered, had driven the Pope from Rome, and had even aimed at snatching from him his own Imperial Crown. The new King, 'this Duke of Orleans, who calls himself King of France,' was pursuing the same policy: asked to behave as a good and just Prince and restore Burgundian territories, to which he had no right, he had replied mockingly with a refusal; asked to submit his Italian claims to arbitration, he had again declined. 'Now you know the tale of treason, fraud, and injury from which I have suffered, and the good reasons we have—you, my beloved and loyal subjects, and I—to dip our swords in French blood. Even if we do not draw them to avenge past injuries, let us at least do so to ward off the imminent and obvious peril of falling a prey to French ambition. We must arm instantly, and we must do so in the firm resolve either to reduce France to such straits that we shall have nothing more to fear or to perish in the attempt. That is why I am here; that is why I am making an army ready, to go and attack these French wherever they may be found. Reflect for a moment upon the conduct of these French: not content with subjugating so many Duchies and seigneuries, with pillaging them and violating their matrons and damsels, now they want Italy; they want my Crown, that Crown which by every right is mine; they want Navarre and Roussillon, to keep open the way into Spain. Of late they have entered my County of Burgundy, the gateway of the Empire. Should they get possession of it, you will be the first victims of fire and sword; after you, the Empire; and then the entire universe. Come on then bravely, and doubt not that we shall be victorious. God will be with us, to uphold our just cause and to punish their persistent evil-doing. Fear not their strength or their wealth, for in them is not so much power as pomp. I have fought against them for more than twenty years; I have often beaten them; and in days when I was younger and less experienced, I took from them the provinces which they had treacherously seized. The gains they make are never the rewards of strength, but always the fruits of treason. Hasten

then to arms! Thus shall we save each other, and, by forcing the French to rest content with what is theirs, we shall perform a task well-pleasing to Almighty God.'[1]

The deeds of the King of the Romans fell short of these brave promises. Taken unawares by Charles' sudden death, he had neither men nor money ready for a war with France, and, left without support from the Italian League, he hesitated to tilt against his enemy in single combat. Despite a strong personal dislike he therefore turned to Henry VII, and suggested a joint attack on France, in which England would recover her lost provinces by means of the wonders which he could be counted on to perform. Henry, who knew his man, remarked that he 'should like to see the King of the Romans at war with France, but only by way of witnessing his wonderful feats, and not in order to take part himself in the enterprise'.[2] Events soon proved the shrewdness of his opinion, for when, encouraged by Ludovic, Maximilian did at last throw prudence to the winds and invade Burgundy, a small body of French men-at-arms sufficed to bring his operations to a standstill.

For such transient embarrassment as had been occasioned to him by this attack the King of France presently avenged himself by a surprising diplomatic success. While his soldiers were making war on Maximilian's troops in Burgundy, his envoys were making a treaty of peace and alliance with Maximilian's son in the Low Countries. The Archduke Philip had been negotiating with the French Government about the Somme towns at the time of Charles VIII's death. Of a generous and pleasure-loving disposition, which inclined him to the ways of peace, he determined not to break off these negotiations until he had seen what attitude the new King would take up. Louis was pacific and polite, assured him that he meant to restore all that belonged to him, and extended to him a cordial invitation to be present at his coronation. The relations thus happily inaugurated did, indeed, suffer a slight set-back as a result of the breach between Louis and Maximilian, but in July 1498 negotiations were resumed, and on 2nd August peace was signed in Paris. Philip's representatives had demanded the restitution of

[1] *Miscellanea di Storia Italiana*, vol. xxxv, pp. 367–9.
[2] *Calendar of State Papers, Spain*, vol. i, p. 157.

Béthune, Aire, and Hesdin under the terms of the treaty of Senlis, and had asserted their master's right to the Duchy of Burgundy, Auxerre, Mâcon, and Bar-sur-Seine. The French plenipotentiaries had required that the Archduke should do homage for his possessions in Flanders and Artois, and should procure the evacuation of Burgundy by Maximilian's troops. These matters were thus dealt with in the treaty: homage was to be done for the French fiefs, but, as Philip was not able to visit France for the purpose of doing it in person, the King would send a representative to receive it in Artois; the three frontier towns should be restored as soon as homage should be done and the Imperial troops should have retired; the Austrian claims to Burgundy and the other districts should not be advanced during the joint lives of Louis and Philip; and Louis would not assert the French claim to Lille, Douay, and Orchies. In pursuance of this arrangement the Chancellor of France went to Arras in July 1499, and there a significant scene was enacted. The Archduke presented himself to render homage; he was bareheaded, and would have knelt, had not the Chancellor prevented him; and he was thus addressed: 'You become the liege-man of your sovereign lord, the King, and you promise faithfully to serve him until death against all the world without reservation.' Béthune, Aire, and Hesdin were then given back by the French, for the other condition had been fulfilled. Deserted by his son, and weary of an indecisive and costly war, Maximilian had agreed to a truce and recalled his troops. The defection of the Archduke had not been his sole diplomatic defeat. In Northern Europe, where there was a union between Denmark, Norway, and Sweden, the fears which King John of Denmark entertained of an intervention by the Empire disposed him to a policy of friendship with France. In Scandinavia, therefore, France had ready to her hand an instrument for the restraint of Germany similar to that which in the Scottish alliance she had forged for the restraint of England; and in July 1498 a treaty of peace and alliance between Louis XII and King John was made through the mediation of the King of Scotland.[1]

[1] Dumont, *Corps diplomatique*, vol. iii, part ii, pp. 386–8, 396–7; Pélissier, *Louis XII et Ludovic Sforza*, vol. i, pp. 139–44; Lavisse, *Histoire de France* vol. v, part i, pp. 47–8, 49.

Scandinavia, however, was a long way off; its influence upon events in Italy could be but indirect; and it was in a country nearer home that the diplomatic battle for Milan would be lost or won. The Swiss Confederation held the scales between Louis and Ludovic: if they were to join Louis, they might paralyse the King of the Romans, and ensure to France a decisive superiority on the field of battle; if they were to support Ludovic, they might close the Alpine passes to French armies, and by refusing the use of their infantry deprive them of an essential component, which could not well be supplied from any other source. The decisive influence which their geographical position and military prowess enabled the Swiss to exert upon all the Italian wars in this period will be deemed to justify, if, indeed, it be not thought to demand, some examination of the political situation, recent relationships, and present aims of the Confederacy.

The French designs on Milan raised questions of great difficulty for the Cantons, whose attitude since the time of Charles the Bold had been one of aloofness from international affairs. Their proximity to Milan, their commercial interests in the Duchy, and their claim to portions of its territory made it impossible that they should remain indifferent, when the possession of Milan was in dispute; but it was by no means certain what attitude they would assume towards that dispute. The Cantons differed widely in character, in interests, and in sympathies. Some, predominantly Teutonic in civilization and sentiment, looked towards Germany; some looked towards France. Some were aristocratic, and some urban; some were democratic, and some rural. Some were immediately and vitally concerned in Milan, with the fate of which their political aspirations and economic welfare were inseparably connected; others, affected by these matters indirectly, if at all, cared much more about French pensions and the emoluments to be derived from the contracts of mercenary service under the French Government. Some, therefore, inclined towards Ludovic; others favoured the maintenance of the old friendship with France. So many divergences might have produced uncertainty or confusion, even if the political constitution of the Confederacy had possessed simplicity and strength. In fact, that constitution, antiquated and inefficient, was peculiarly ill adapted to deal

with the problems which the rapid development of international politics was beginning to force upon its attention.

The traditional friendship between France and the Cantons was under an eclipse when Charles died, because that sovereign had never been able to liquidate the large arrears of pay long overdue to the Swiss mercenaries for the Naples and Novara campaigns. So great was the irritation at Charles' lack of faith that the Swiss actually invited Maximilian to refuse to make peace with France, until their demands had been satisfied; the Bailli of Dijon, the once popular representative of the King of France, was denied a safe-conduct and subjected to serious ill-treatment; and several Cantons inclined definitely to Ludovic, with whom they negotiated specific agreements. With Louis' accession, however, the Swiss question entered upon a fresh phase. The successor of Charles VIII knew the military worth of the brave and hardy mountaineers; he had led them to victory at Rapallo; he had stood shoulder to shoulder with them during the long weeks of strenuous effort and acute privation which had made the siege of Novara memorable. Far more clearly than Charles had ever seen it, he saw the importance of regaining Swiss friendship and reviving the old alliance. The Swiss, on their part, knowing their support to be indispensable to his schemes of conquest, thought that they might safely look to him to carry out the promises which Charles had broken. Nor could they be sure that French aid might not become valuable, and perhaps almost indispensable, to themselves, for their relations with the King of the Romans had been growing steadily worse since the beginning of the previous year. Maximilian wanted to impose upon them a policy of Imperial reform which threatened their independence and ran counter to their whole past, and any such attempt they were determined to resist, if necessary by force of arms. The risk of war was becoming real, and Ludovic was fast losing by the unpopularity of his chief ally the ground which he had gained by the unpopularity of his former enemy.

The alliance which Charles VIII had made with the Cantons in 1495 was for his life only, and expired upon the demise of the Crown. Immediately upon his accession Louis sent a secret agent to Switzerland, to promise that pending the negotiation of a fresh arrangement he would observe all

his predecessor's engagements and discharge all his obligations. He offered to renew the old treaty unaltered, if all the Cantons would agree to such a course. Such an agreement could not be obtained, because Berne, Lucerne, Schwyz, and Unterwalden were then in treaty with Ludovic, with whom in October 1498 they concluded a political and economic treaty. This treaty was beneficial to Ludovic in so far as it created an obstacle to the renewal of the old arrangement between France and the Cantons; but since it did not pledge its signatories to render mutual military support, it might be doubted whether it was worth the cost in concessions and promises at which Ludovic had purchased it. Meanwhile his ally persisted in the policy which neutralized all his own efforts. In the Diet of August 13th the representatives of Maximilian requested the recall of all Swiss troops in the service of France and permission for themselves to enroll soldiers. As these demands were not accompanied by any offer to remove Swiss grievances, the Diet refused them. The refusal surprised and displeased the Empire; the attitude of the Empire aroused suspicion and annoyance in Switzerland; and in spite of all the endeavours of Milan and her partisans the controversy between Maximilian and the Confederacy entered upon a phase to which there could be no end but war.

When this war began, opinion in Switzerland was profoundly affected, and the renewal of the French alliance could no longer be resisted even by the staunchest friends of Milan. Availing himself of the favourable turn of events, Louis at the close of 1498 sent another embassy, which was commissioned to negotiate a defensive alliance. Under the pressure of war all difficulties were speedily removed. The French ambassadors gave up their demand that the Confederacy should supply a contingent of 6,000 men, and contented themselves with an authority to enroll recruits. Despite the opposition of the four Cantons which had recently made the treaty with Milan, they obtained an express declaration that Ludovic was not an ally of the Confederacy, and they also secured the insertion of a clause forbidding Swiss soldiers to take service against the King of France. Louis undertook to pay an annual subsidy of 20,000 *livres*, and, when the Confederacy should be at war, either to pro-

vide a further subvention or to give them military aid. These arrangements were embodied in a treaty signed at Lucerne on 16th March 1499. That instrument may be regarded as a decisive triumph for Louis in the diplomatic duel between himself and the Duke of Milan.[1]

By virtue of its geographical position, which gave control of some of the Alpine passes, the Duchy of Savoy would be able to exert an influence upon coming events, and, though of small political importance by comparison with the great military Republic near at hand, this border State could not be ignored by an intending invader of the Milanese. When Louis XII came to the throne, France and Savoy were connected by relationships of long standing. The reigning Houses were united by more than one marriage; the father of the late King, Charles VIII, and the father of the future sovereign, Francis I, had each taken his bride from the Ducal House; Anne de Beaujeu had maintained a friendly contact with her Savoyard relatives; and Charles VIII had made an alliance with Savoy at the time of his Italian expedition. Despite a traditional policy which seemed to load the dice in favour of the King of France, there was nevertheless a possibility that Savoy in 1498 might abandon its accustomed line of conduct. The Duchy had lately passed into the hands of a new ruler, the old Duke, Philippe, having died in November 1497, when his son, Philibert le Beau, mounted the throne. As yet the new Duke, immersed in pleasures, had taken little interest in politics, and Savoy was governed in his name by his mother, the Duchess Dowager Bianca, and his natural brother, the Bastard of Savoy, aided by the men who had served as Chancellor and Treasurer under the late Duke. As the result in part of French excesses and reverses and in part of Milanese pensions and promises the influence of France had diminished sensibly under this *régime*. Bianca allowed her agents in France to act as spies for Ludovic; all the political information from that country which reached the Government of Savoy was passed on by

[1] Dumont, *Corps diplomatique*, vol. iii, part ii, p. 406; Gagliardi, *Der Anteil der Schweizer an den italienischen Kriegen, 1494–1516*, vol. i, pp. 257–87; Pélissier, *Louis XII et Ludovic Sforza*, vol. i, pp. 145–50; E. Rott, *Histoire de la représentation diplomatique de la France auprès des Cantons Suisses*, vol. i.

her or other members to Ludovic's *chargé d'affaires*, Pirovani; and the representative of Venice was treated with a coldness which grew with every increase in the friendship between his Signory and the King of France.[1]

In November 1498, after an exchange of diplomatic courtesies between Paris and Turin, Louis XII sent an embassy to Philibert, to propose a defensive alliance. The offer was not at first accepted, although the Duke personally favoured an arrangement which he considered financially advantageous and politically desirable. At his instigation negotiations were soon renewed, the sentiments of his advisers being much modified by the stinginess lately displayed by Ludovic in the distribution of bribes. In February 1499 Trivulzio was sent from Asti to Turin, and after a long conversation with the Bastard was received by the Duke in secret audience. On the following day a banquet was given in his honour. Meanwhile negotiations for an alliance were going actively forward in Paris between the Cardinal of Rouen and the representative of Savoy, and by a treaty agreed to in principle in February, signed in May, and confirmed in June, the Duke of Savoy definitely espoused the French cause. He promised to give passage through his territories to French armies, to furnish them with supplies, guides, and lodgings, to permit his subjects to take service under Louis, and to close his frontiers against Milanese troops: he also agreed to provide a contingent of 600 horse and 2,000 foot, should the need for such assistance arise. Louis agreed to pay for these troops at the rate of 3,000 *écus au soleil* a month, to give the Duke the command of a company of 100 lances, and to pay pensions of 22,000 *l.t.* and 10,000 *l.t.* respectively to him and to his brother, the Bastard. The King and the Duke pledged themselves that neither would make any separate peace.[2] Thus Savoy also was made secure for France; and, when the time for action should come, the rulers of Montferrat and Saluzzo

[1] Gabotto, *Lo Stato Sabaudo*, vol. iii, p. 101.

[2] Pélissier, 'Le Traité d'alliance de Louis XII et de Philibert de Savoie en 1499', *Mémoires de la Section des Lettres de l'Académie des Sciences et Lettres de Montpellier*, Series II, vol. i, pp. 52–81; *Louis XII et Ludovic Sforza*, vol. i, pp. 173–8; Dumont, *Corps diplomatique*, vol. iii, part ii, p. 408; Quinsonas, *Matériaux pour servir à l'histoire de Marguerite d'Autriche*, vol. iii, pp. 6–10.

would also take French pay, and help to fight Louis' battles.

In Italy Louis XII was to find that the way to success had been paved by his predecessor's failure, and of that failure the Duke of Milan prided himself upon being the chief cause. 'Upon one of the inner walls of his palace he had had the map of Italy painted with a number of cocks, hens, and chickens and a Moor, broom in hand, sweeping them all away. When, however, he asked the Florentine ambassador, Francesco Gualterotti, for his opinion of the picture, the latter replied that it was a pretty fancy, but that it appeared to him that the Moor, in trying to sweep the cocks out of Italy, was being smothered by the dust.'[1] The criticism was just. Unsuccessful though it had been, Charles VIII's invasion had wrought havoc in the politics of a country which depended for its tranquillity upon delicate relationships and a nice balance of power. Of the States which had combined to resist the French, none but Milan had emerged unscathed from the contest. Venice had borne the burden and heat of the day only to find that she could gather no harvest commensurate with her efforts, and now she brooded over her injuries in sullen indignation. It was not Venetian policy which had brought Charles into Italy; nor had it been specially to the interest of Venice that he should be expelled. Yet, when the instigators of the French invasion, repenting of their rashness, had requested her assistance, she had shut her eyes to tempting French offers in order that she might play her part in the defence of Italy. In that effort, which had brought her nothing but its attendant dangers and expense, she considered that she had done enough, and she was confirmed in that opinion by the reflection that, instead of being rewarded for her exertions, she had been most shamefully used. She could not pardon Ludovic for his treachery at Vercelli and for his cruel indifference to her moral and material interests. The proud Republic must ruefully admit that, as events had turned out, the chief result of the French invasion was an alarming increase in the power and prestige of a neighbour whom it had long viewed with jealousy, and had now learned to regard

[1] Villari, *The Life and Times of Niccolò Machiavelli*, Eng. trans., vol. i, pp. 265–6.

with hatred and fear. This humiliating situation had not been improved by the subsequent policy of the Signory. Venice could expect no favour from Maximilian, in whose breast old-standing grievances about Friulian territories were quickened by bitter memories of his Italian fiasco, for which he laid the blame in large measure upon the niggardliness and tepidity of her support. She had lost the friendship of Naples by her refusal to surrender the harbours which she had occupied as the price of her contribution to Neapolitan defence. She had added needlessly to her difficulties by an ill-judged intervention in favour of Pisa, in which there was not even so much as a problematical advantage to set off against the certainty of Florentine enmity, manifesting itself in a *rapprochement* with Ludovic. The Pisa affair greatly intensified the ill-will between Venice and Milan, when these two States openly ranged themselves on opposite sides in that interminable quarrel. The anger of Ludovic could not be softened by the assurances of the Venetian ambassador that his Government desired only that Pisa should remain free. 'It is not true', the Duke answered him, 'that Venice desires Pisa's freedom. She wants to conquer it herself, and, when she has got it, to add to it Leghorn and Genoa besides. I am jealous for my State, as are you for your own: never will I permit you to have the place.'[1] When the Duke proceeded to refuse a passage through his territories to Venetian troops on their way to Pisa, and summoned a conference of the States notoriously hostile to Venice, the imminence of a conflict between the two chief powers of Northern Italy could no longer be in doubt.

It was in the midst of these alarms that Venice heard of the death of Charles VIII, which changed the whole aspect of Italian politics. The courier who brought the news to Florence accomplished the journey from Amboise in seven days, foundering many horses on the road. On Easter Sunday, 14th April, it was known on the lagoons, and was there received with much satisfaction. As an old friend of her own and as a declared enemy of the Duke of Milan the new King was doubly acceptable to Venice, and everybody was delighted when he wrote to the Signory in very pleasant terms, to signify his goodwill and to propose an alliance.

[1] Cipolla, *Storia delle Signorie Italiane dal 1313 al 1530*, vol. ii, pp. 761–2.

The Venetian agent at Turin, Stella, was at once sent to congratulate him upon his accession, and it was decided later that Niccolò Michiel, Antonio Loredan, and Hieronimo Zorzi should be sent after him on a formal embassy. Before these ambassadors were ready to leave, another feat of rapid travel brought news from Stella: he wrote from the Bois de Vincennes, near Paris, on 23rd May, and on 3rd June his letters were in the hands of the Signory. His reception, he wrote,[1] had been highly gratifying, the King having sent immediately upon his arrival to tell him that he might have an audience as soon as he pleased. He had therefore gone at once to wait upon His Majesty, who rose as he entered the room, and came forward to greet him; nor would he permit him to kneel, but putting his hand on his shoulder, addressed him as follows: 'Welcome, Mr. Secretary, you are right welcome to France, and we are delighted to see you. What news of the Signory? And how fares the Doge?' 'They fare well,' answered Stella, 'and are wholly at Your Majesty's service.' Presenting his letters credential, the Secretary then explained that he was but the forerunner of a formal embassy. Louis expressed his pleasure at the news, and, on learning the names of the ambassadors, said that he had not happened to meet Zorzi on his former visits, but knew Loredan well, liked him much, and had been able to render him some small service. He would be glad to see all the ambassadors, and hoped that they would arrive in time for his coronation. He was well disposed towards the Signory, and thought more highly of Venice than of any State in Italy. Stella might have audiences whenever he pleased, and was to mention to the King personally any matter which he might wish to discuss.

Stella concluded his account by saying that he had been welcomed, not by the King only, but by all the lords of the Court. The Duke of Lorraine, who was in high favour with the King, had received him very well; and so had Commynes, who desired to be remembered to the Signory. Commynes said that he had always told the late King of the Signory's great power, and knew for certain that the new King would be a true friend to Venice. The King in the course of conversation had told him how the whole kingdom had rendered obedience to him, claiming that the process had been ac-

[1] Sanuto, *I Diarii*, vol. i, cols. 979–80, 987.

complished more thoroughly than anything achieved in his predecessor's time. Stella was not surprised. His own impression was that Louis was 'greatly beloved—even adored—throughout the realm for his many excellent qualities'.

The friendliness of Stella's reception was as nothing to the honours heaped by Louis upon the three ambassadors, when at length they reached France. Met at the frontier by a Royal herald, they were escorted into the capital by a company of a hundred archers commanded by the Count of Ligny, the King's cousin. Two Royal residences were set apart for their occupation, and they were assigned a maintenance allowance at the rate of fifty *livres* daily—a thing unprecedented in France, where no ambassador ever received a grant from the Government. These unusual favours were the more remarkable, because the King, when asked by the envoys of certain Italian States to receive an embassy from Milan, peremptorily declined.[1]

In a letter[2] from a member of the ambassadorial staff we find a lively account of the early experiences of the Venetian envoys. 'On August 3rd', wrote Niccolò Michiel's seneschal, 'we left Étampes for Paris, and at a place called Zatris met the former Queen. We could not get lodgings here, because the whole place was occupied by the Queen's Court; so in spite of incessant rain we were obliged to go on to a place called Monarino. On the way thither we met the Queen, driving in a covered carriage with the daughter of the King of Naples. Both ladies, in my judgement, are very lovely. They were accompanied by many young ladies on horseback and by some elderly ones in carriages; counting saddle-horses and draught-horses, there were possibly as many as 3,000 horses in all. With all these people about, we could not find lodgings at Monarino either, and so, constrained by necessity, we had to make the best of darkness and rain and ride on to a place called Longimio, where at last, tired out and without our baggage, we got put up in half a dozen different inns. Here we stayed till Sunday, when we were requested by His Majesty to come on to Paris, where a residence had been prepared for the ambassadors. We reached Paris

[1] Sanuto, *I Diarii*, vol. i, cols. 1029, 1034.

[2] *Ibid.*, cols. 1048–9. The places called by the writer Zatris and Monarino are, probably, Étréchy and Montlhéry. Longimio is, certainly, Longjumeau.

on the 5th, and were met by M. de Ligny, a man high in favour with the King, and by ever so many other lords, with whom were also some well-appointed archers of the Royal Guard. On Sunday the 12th at Étampes the ambassadors were received in audience by the King, who displayed the utmost cordiality. It would take long to tell you all, and I will content myself with saying that His Majesty could not have done more. He gave audience, not in the palace, but in the La Fontaine inn, where we were at such close quarters that even I found myself rubbing shoulders with Royalty. If you object that an inn is no fit place for such a sovereign, I answer that in these countries there are no houses so good as the inns. Besides, as a matter of fact, the Queen is lodged in the Royal castle here, so that the King, if he wanted to receive the ambassadors, had no option but to receive them in an inn.'

Another eye-witness of the ceremony in the hostelry reported that Loredan had delivered a splendid speech, which had made a favourable impression. When the ambassadors entered the audience chamber, the King was seated in a chair ornamented with fleurs-de-lys. Directly he caught sight of Loredan, who entered first, he said with a smile: 'Here is our good father'; and then, as the ambassador approached, rose and greeted him with the utmost cordiality. The whole time Loredan was speaking, the King kept his eyes on him, and every time he doffed his cap, said: 'Mettez vostre bonnet.' At the end of the speech he rose from his seat, and made himself agreeable to all the ambassadors, being particularly affable to Loredan, whom he treated with almost filial respect.[1]

The agents of the Duke of Milan were well aware that there was a serious background to these diplomatic amenities. 'Besides their unusual conduct in leaving Paris for Étampes without being sent for,' the Duke was told, 'the Venetian ambassadors travelled with every appearance of violent haste, sought an audience so urgently that there was no time to prepare a room for their reception, and—which was even worse—as soon as they had entered the room, declared without any congratulatory exordium that they were commissioned by their Signory to speak apart with His Majesty. . . .

[1] Sanuto, *I Diarii*, vol. i, col. 1050.

The reason for all the hurry was that at this time, as was well known, an agreement was being negotiated with the King of the Romans. . . . These ambassadors are not generally liked; indeed, they are very unpopular by reason of the Fornovo affair and of their own and their Signory's haughtiness.'

It was thought, the writer of this secret report went on to say, that there would be an inquiry into the administration during the late reign, coupled with the dismissal of many officials and a large reduction in official salaries. It had been discovered that the late King spent 700,000 *écus* on his *menus plaisirs* in a single year. There was a complaint that all the officials were relatives or friends of the Cardinal of Saint-Malo, who was much out of favour at Court. Monseigneur de Rouen ruled supreme. Amongst the courtiers and Household officers the Governor of Asti [Trivulzio] might be mentioned as one who enjoyed some favour—favour which audacity had won, and which the same quality enabled him to retain.[1] From information sent to Venice we learn that Briçonnet's *protégés* were presently overtaken by the fate which Ludovic's correspondent anticipated for them. All secret business, the Signory were told, was in the hands of the Archbishop of Rouen and the Chancellor. Amongst the late King's financial advisers there had been something like a clean sweep. The General of Languedoc had been dismissed; so had the Cardinal of Saint-Malo's son-in-law, the General of Provence; and the Treasurer of Languedoc had gone too. Indeed, it was perfectly amazing how many men had been deprived of their offices.[2]

After the audience of 12th August the Venetian ambassadors were referred by Louis to his advisers, and on the 18th had a consultation with two lords and two Bishops representing His Majesty. The King, said his spokesmen, had made up his mind to occupy his State of Milan, and also to regain the Kingdom of Naples; since Milan was his by hereditary right, it was upon Milan that he was specially set; and therefore he would be glad to know what were the

[1] 'Memoriale' of August 30th, 1498, published by L. G. Pélissier in *Trois relations sur la situation de la France en 1498 et 1499 envoyées par Ludovic Sforza au duc de Ferrare*, pp. 8–9.

[2] Sanuto, *I Diarii*, vol. i, col. 1013.

views of Venice on these matters, and what help she would be prepared to give. To this the ambassadors replied that they were not empowered to deal with such questions, and must refer to the Signory for further instructions.[1] The answer seemed evasive, but in fact their reticence was amply justified by the vagueness of the brief instructions which so far constituted their sole commission. The terms of that commission had been settled by the Senate, after much discussion, on 10th July: the envoys were to congratulate Louis upon his accession, and were to say that Venice desired a lasting friendship with him; but should he talk of a definite league, they were merely to express appreciation of his attitude, and report to the Senate.[2] The truth was that the Senate had been much divided in opinion. Some senators thought that it was to the interest of Venice to promote a French attack upon Milan, and to participate in it, when it should be made. Others, led by the Doge, feared the establishment of a great military power in close proximity to their own dominions, and were apprehensive lest another war, coming so soon upon the last, should consume resources which might at any time be urgently wanted for repelling another Turkish attack. After the conference between its representatives and the King's councillors on 18th August the Senate was constrained to face the question which it had previously shelved. A prolonged discussion, in which all the most distinguished members took part, resulted in a victory for the party which desired an alliance with Louis, and fresh instructions were sent to the ambassadors for communication to the French Government. No precise instructions had been given in the first instance, they were to say, because, out of respect for the King, the Signory had thought it best to leave His Majesty at liberty to open the discussion as he might please. Now that he had proposed an alliance, the Signory would be glad to know what clauses he desired to have inserted. Should the conquest of Milan be mentioned, the ambassadors were to say that the Duchy marched in great part with Venetian territory, and that such proximity had its dangers; during the life of Louis the Signory would feel secure; but they were bound to think of the future,

[1] Sanuto, *I Diarii*, vol. i, col. 1060.
[2] *Ibid.*, col. 1012.

and it would be their duty to provide against possible perils.[1]

The lack of powers in the ambassadors, and the consequent necessity to refer to the Signory for further instructions, caused a whole month to elapse before they were in a position to reply to the questions which had been put to them in the conference of 18th August, and an impression began not unnaturally to get abroad that things were not going well between the King and the Signory. Opinion in the French Court was divided, some believing that Venice would never tolerate the establishment of a strong power in Milan, whilst others supposed that she might agree to it in the expectation that the King would die childless, when the Republic would appropriate his conquests. Such doubts were removed, when on 18th September the ambassadors were again received in audience, and announced that they had been furnished with full powers to conclude an alliance upon the terms that the Signory would be friends of the King's friends and enemies of his enemies, and would at the Royal pleasure make peace and war with all Princes without exception. To this the King at once agreed in principle, leaving over for settlement in future conferences the precise terms of the projected treaty.

When the details came to be worked out, it was seen how few matters there were upon which the King and the Signory saw eye to eye. They were agreed in a desire for a perpetual peace between themselves, with liberty for the Holy See to join the league; and Venice was prepared to guarantee that she would give no help, direct or indirect, to the Duke of Milan. Beyond this, however, there was no real coincidence of policy, and every other proposal became an occasion for counter-proposals, argument, and eventual compromise. The French suggested community of alliances, reciprocity of friends and enemies, and promises of mutual succour. The Signory replied that Venice could not accept an unqualified reciprocity, because France by the extent of her territory was exposed to many enmities, and was strong enough to provide for her own defence; Venice would accept a limited reciprocity, if accompanied by a promise on Louis' part to

[1] Sanuto, *I Diarii*, vol. i, cols. 1066–7; Pélissier, *Louis XII et Ludovic Sforza*, vol. i, pp. 252–3, 265–6.

come to her aid in the event of an attack by any of Ludovic's allies; should there be a war between Louis and Maximilian, Venice would make a diversion by attacking Milan; and should Maximilian attack Venice, Louis was to pay her a subsidy. The inclusion in the league of the Grand Master of Rhodes, desired by the French, was objected to by Venice, because she wished to avoid any action calculated to provoke Turkish hostilities; and she also demurred to the French proposals about Pisa, which Louis wished to hand over to Florence, so that that State should have no cause to sympathize with Ludovic. The Signory, whose policy had long been favourable to Pisa, asked for time in which to continue certain negotiations in which they were already engaged, and by which they hoped that the Pisan question might be finally settled. Failing such a settlement, they would agree to give up their support of Pisa and admit Florence to the league, if assured by Louis upon his Royal word that nothing should be done against the honour or interest of Venice. Touching the main business of the alliance, the attack upon Ludovic, the French proposed that Venice should put into the field an auxiliary force of 1,500 men-at-arms and 4,000 foot, the latter being composed as far as possible of Swiss; that she should supply Louis with 100,000 ducats for the pay of the Swiss mercenaries intended to be taken into the French service; and that she should be recompensed by territorial concessions. To these demands the Signory replied with an application that the liability of Venice should be limited and her reward defined. She would furnish the auxiliary force upon condition that it should only be sent against Milan when Louis was prepared to deliver a simultaneous attack with his own forces, and that these forces should comprise at least 1,500 lances and 6,000 foot, numbers which the Signory regarded as the minimum necessary for success. She must protest against the suggested subsidy, since it would throw upon her the entire cost of the expedition. The promise of territorial recompense must be made specific, and should include the whole region up to the River Adda with the towns and places on both banks.

It was not easy to overcome these difficulties, when the Venetian ambassadors possessed no authority to commit their Government, and must refer to the Signory for fresh

instructions upon every new point that arose; and repeated delays, which accorded ill with the King's impatience, did not help to smooth the way of diplomacy. At the outset it would have been fairly easy to induce Louis to give up his demand for a subsidy, but as time passed, and delays were multiplied, his attitude hardened. In November the ambassadors 'found the moment opportune, and begged the King to drop his demand for 100,000 ducats. "Well, well," he answered, "we will talk of it some other time. I mean to be on good terms with your Signory, and no one shall prevent it. I hope that we shall manage to agree".'[1] Ludovic, he added, was sending envoys to offer a tribute, but he doubted whether they would venture to approach him: were they to do so, they would be sent off ignominiously. Three weeks later the Royal temper was much less accommodating, and the ambassadors were obliged ruefully to report that the King insisted upon the subsidy, and declined to listen to the proposal that both banks of the Adda should be ceded to Venice.[2] On being told that the Signory could not spare the money by reason of the Turk, he was ill pleased, and threatened to break off the negotiations and come to terms with Maximilian or the King of Naples. It was urged upon him by Cardinal della Rovere, who took the Signory's part, that Venice would be untrue to her trust, if she were to do anything which might disqualify her from acting as the bulwark of Christendom against the infidel; the King would be likely to find also, added the Cardinal, that an alliance with Maximilian would be ruinously expensive. In private, however, della Rovere told the ambassadors that in his belief the clause proposed by Venice for cancelling her military obligations to France in the event of a threat of Turkish hostilities would never be accepted by the French, since it would enable Venice to say at any time that she could not go to war, because the Turk was arming.[3]

'These Venetians', said the King, in one of his moments of annoyance, 'are a nation of traders, and the business it suits them to engage in is a traffic in words. So be it! For my part, however, I do not intend to put up with it.'[4] No

[1] Sanuto, *I Diarii*, vol. ii, cols. 151–2.
[2] *Ibid.*, cols. 235–8.
[3] *Ibid.*, cols. 448–9.
[4] Pélissier, *Louis XII et Ludovic Sforza*, vol. i, p. 277.

less difficult was the mood of the Cardinal of Rouen, whose leaning towards Florence made him critical of Venetian policy; others followed where the King and his chief adviser led the way; and when the ambassadors ventured to argue that the demand for money was inconsistent with the King's honour, Marshal de Gié angrily cut them short with the words: 'You mind the Signory's honour, and leave His Majesty to take care of his own.'[1] When the end of January came, and still the ambassadors lacked power to conclude a treaty, annoyance began to be succeeded by distrust in the minds of the French. The dilatoriness of the Signory became the talk of the Court, and the belief gained ground that Venice had entered upon negotiations to deceive the King, and had never intended that an agreement should be reached. But the blackest darkness precedes the dawn, and the moment was at hand when the gloom would be dispersed.

On 9th February 1499, after six long months of argument and anxiety, the ambassadors were at last able to send home from Angers the welcome news that the King had overridden his Council, who with one exception were opposed to it, and had decided that a treaty should be signed in a form acceptable to the Signory. The ambassadors had been summoned to the castle on the 7th, and there in the presence of the whole Council and of Cardinal della Rovere, the Duke of Valentinois, and the envoy of the Pope, a draft had been read out by the Chancellor. Touching the inclusion of the Pope in the league, the French at the instigation of Cesare and the Papal envoy had attempted to procure the insertion of a clause to the effect that the King and the Republic took His Holiness into their protection against all the world; and the clause had been defended upon the ground that it did no more than state the duty incumbent upon all Christian powers. The ambassadors had demurred, however: the clause was entirely new, they had said; it was not covered by their instructions; and they could not accept it. There had then been an adjournment, in order that the matter might be further considered; and during this interval the Count of Ligny, the one member of the Council who favoured the treaty, had come to the ambassadors and told them that the King was much disturbed, because he considered that he

[1] Sanuto, *I Diarii*, vol. ii, col. 238.

would be put in the position of being unable to promise protection to the Pope without first obtaining the consent of the Signory. Ligny had then suggested a compromise: the Pope was to be informed that the league had been concluded, and that liberty was reserved for him to adhere; should he elect not to do so, the league would remain valid as between Venice and France. This arrangement the ambassadors had felt justified in accepting, but no sooner was it agreed to than another acute difficulty arose. The French wanted to provide that Venice should not be excused from military co-operation with France on the ground of Turkish hostilities, if such hostilities should be opened after French operations had begun. Maintaining that Venice ought to rely on the King's honour, the Chancellor had declared that the clause in the form desired by the Signory was actually favourable to the Duke of Milan, because it would be easy for him to get the Turks to fit out a few galleys every year, and by these means the Signory would be put to constant expense. He had then drafted a new clause in substantially the same terms as the old one, and in menacing tones the Cardinal of Rouen and Marshal de Gié had declared: 'If they will not accept this, we will not sign. His Majesty has given up the 100,000 ducats, and has said nothing about Pisa. Does not that suffice? We will have no more discussion.' And so the thing had been settled at last, and that day the treaty had been solemnly sworn. After the ceremony the King had assured the ambassadors that his desire was that the Milanese affair at every stage and in every detail should be carried through in complete accord with the wishes of the Signory.[1]

The treaty thus laboriously framed was confirmed in its final form on 15th April. It provided for a league and alliance between the King and the Republic, who would defend each other against all the world except only the Pope, and for him liberty to join the league was reserved. 'Since the aforesaid Most Christian King purposes with God's help to recover the Duchy of Milan and other lands now held by Ludovic Sforza, which are part of his ancient and rightful patrimony, and belong to him by hereditary right; it is agreed that, whenever the King shall levy war on the said

[1] Sanuto, *I Diarii*, vol. ii, cols. 453–4.

Ludovic or other the occupiers of the said lands, Venice on demand shall at her own expense aid the King with 1,500 men-at-arms and 4,000 foot, until the final and complete recovery of the said lands: provided nevertheless that Venice shall not be called upon to give the stipulated aid, if there shall be an actual threat of war by a Turkish fleet against the dominions of Venice, except in the event of war on Ludovic having already been begun, when Venice shall not be permitted to plead the Turk as an excuse for withdrawing.' Should the Emperor begin war against the Most Christian King, the Venetians at his request would at once make a diversion against Milan; and should the Emperor attack the Republic, the King would likewise come to its aid. In recompense for the great expense to be incurred by Venice, and as a guarantee of her security, the King would cede to her in full sovereignty Cremona and the Cremonese and all the cities, towns, places, castles, and lands beyond the Adda except Lecco.[1] Such was the arrangement by which Venice was to do the thing which once she had so loudly condemned, and to sacrifice the integrity of Italy to the supposed advantage of a single Italian State.

In the diplomatic battle which preceded the attack on Milan Louis XII had thus won the advantage all along the line. He had got promises of assistance from the Swiss Confederacy and the Duchy of Savoy; he had made treaties of peace and friendship with England, Spain, and the Archduke; and in Italy he could count upon the active co-operation of the powerful Republic of St. Mark, the goodwill of the Holy See, and the benevolent neutrality of Florence. His enemy had nothing to set against these successes but offers of help from two or three Italian States of secondary importance, an alliance of very doubtful value with the inconstant Head of the Empire, and an understanding with the Turk, which, since it had scandalized Christendom, had inflicted moral damage far outweighing any possible material gain.

When once the Pope and the Venetians had declared for France, there were few left in Italy who could lend effective aid to Milan. There was, indeed, in Naples a ruler to whom

[1] Dumont, *Corps diplomatique*, vol. iii, part ii, pp. 406–7; Romanin, *Storia documentata di Venezia*, vol. v, pp. 108–9.

French ambition was scarcely less formidable than to Ludovic himself, for Louis XII had taken up his predecessor's Angevin claims, had assumed the title of King of Naples, and in spite of his wish for peace with Spain had obdurately refused to recognize Federigo as an ally of the Spanish sovereigns. But Naples was in no condition to take a hand in other people's quarrels. The French invasion had ruined the country: misery, famine, and anarchy were rife; the public revenue had almost vanished; the harbours of the kingdom were still occupied by Venetian fleets; Spanish armies still trod its soil. That it was to Federigo's interest to support one who, like himself, was threatened by the French, at enmity with Venice, and estranged from the Pope, was plain enough, but he had to reckon with his poverty and lack of resources, with the precariousness of his authority, and with the danger from Angevin partisans within and without the kingdom, against whom he might at any moment be called upon to defend his throne. Wavering between courage and fear, Federigo put off his decision till the eleventh hour, and then sent to Ludovic assistance too late in time and too poor in quality to avail him in the extremity of his peril.

Of the Pope, despite his negotiations with Louis XII, Ludovic for a time entertained some hopes, based upon the influence at the Roman Court of his brother, Ascanio, and upon the annoyance of Alexander at the dilatoriness of the French in providing Cesare with a bride. 'Talking with me and other Cardinals after mass this morning', Ascanio reported on 2nd April, 'His Holiness referred to the reports received here by private individuals about a league between His Holiness, the King of France, and the Venetians, complaining vehemently of them, and affirming with oaths that they are utterly false, for he has sent to France no power to conclude any such league. He added that he was of the same mind as before, and, as soon as his requests were granted, would join the Princes of Italy and work for their benefit. He heartily abused the French, and showed himself to be ill pleased with them. He did, however, say that, if the Italian Princes would not satisfy his requirements, he would in that case go over to the French, enter into an alliance with them, and do all sorts of other things. The Cardinals who were present encouraged him to persevere in his good

intentions as being consonant with the high dignity of his position. In the course of his remarks His Holiness declared that the preparations which the French were making to the detriment of Italy were being financed, not by the money of the French themselves, but by cash supplied by certain Italians, meaning by this the Venetians.' [1] But these remarks of the Pope were made at a moment when his annoyance about Cesare's marriage was at its height, and a month later, when the union with Charlotte d'Albret had been definitely arranged, Ludovic found that he had to reckon in Alexander with one who was as 'wholly French and Venetian' as Louis and the Doge themselves. In July, when the crisis was approaching, a Papal Chamberlain, sent to France to urge upon Louis that he should come in person to Italy, was arrested in Ludovic's dominions and detained in Alessandria. The Pope, furiously angry, wrote to Ludovic, threatening to excommunicate him for attacking the Church and for calling in the Turk against Christian powers; and about the same time Ascanio deemed it prudent to flee from Rome.[2]

There was no one else in Italy to whom Ludovic could look for substantial assistance. His relative, Caterina Sforza, would have willingly helped him, if she could, for she was menaced by the ambition of Louis' allies; but she was crippled by the difficulties of her own position, the insignificance of her State, the rivalries among her officers, and her military commitments to the Florentines. Ercole of Ferrara, Ludovic's father-in-law, had long been his ally, and repeated disputes over the Polesine had left him on very bad terms with Venice; but he was also an old friend of the French, and his policy was to steer clear of the quarrel, and keep in with all the disputants. It seemed, indeed, as though every scheme of Ludovic was doomed to go awry, and every hope to fail. Another severe disappointment awaited him in the shiftiness of the Marquis of Mantua, of whom at first he had reason to feel sure. At the time of Louis' accession the Marquis, who had led the forces of the Italian league at Fornovo, and enjoyed a high reputation as a soldier, still smarted under the affront which Venice had put upon him when she dismissed him from her service in the summer of

[1] Jean d'Auton, *Chroniques de Louis XII*, ed. R. de Maulde, vol. i, pp. 324–5. [2] Sanuto, *I Diarii*, vol. ii, col. 958.

1497, and in May 1498 he agreed to enter Ludovic's service, provided that Ludovic should succeed in procuring for him before the following October the title of Imperial Captain in Italy. When October came, and the condition had not been complied with, the Marquis took the opportunity to reconsider his position: he realized that, if Ludovic could not get from Maximilian a small favour such as the grant of a military title, he was unlikely to get from him much real help against the French, and that Ludovic would probably be left alone to face, not only France, but France and Venice combined. Having no desire to espouse a losing cause, he therefore determined to avail himself of the proviso which enabled him to rescind the contract with Milan, in order that he might be free to re-enter the service of Venice. The Signory agreed to his proposals; but fidelity was not a quality which an employer could hope to find in this vain and touchy hireling, and when Maximilian tardily agreed to give him the title of Captain-General of the Empire in Italy, whilst the Signory delayed to reappoint him to the supreme command, he once more deserted Venice, and solemnly renewed his cancelled contract with Milan. Upon the proclamation of the Franco-Venetian alliance, which seemed to him to foredoom Ludovic to defeat, the Marquis changed his mind yet once again, set himself to invent pretexts for picking a quarrel with his employer for the purpose of evading his contractual liabilities, and in June 1499, with the backing of Louis XII, whom the Signory dared not offend, got himself inscribed for the third time on the roll of Venetian captains. His loss was serious for Ludovic, not for any merits in the man himself, for these were negligible, but because by the unmerited prestige which attached to his name his example would have its effect upon all the other *condottieri* in Italy.[1]

Apart, then, from the Turk, who might possibly create a diversion by attacking the colonial possessions of Venice, but could give no protection against the might of France, there was but one quarter in which Ludovic could look for effective aid, and in that quarter at least it seemed that he must surely meet with success. Maximilian had invested him with his Ducal title; he had sought a bride in his family; he was him-

[1] Pélissier, *Louis XII et Ludovic Sforza*, vol. i, pp. 190–216.

self the bitter enemy of Ludovic's rival; and he was bound to Ludovic by a long-standing alliance based upon a real community of interests. But he who founded his hopes upon the King of the Romans built upon the sand. On the eve of the invasion of Burgundy the Milanese ambassador in Venice was asked by the Signory whether Maximilian had provided himself with adequate resources before beginning hostilities. The ambassador replied that he must doubtless have done so, but the Doge shook his head dubiously, knowing too well the usual state of the Imperial Micawber's preparedness. Ludovic himself admitted that it was impossible to rely upon him, because he was always settling upon something one day and doing something else on the morrow. In spite of this unfavourable estimate, however, Ludovic did in fact place considerable faith in Imperial boasts and promises. He more than half believed Maximilian, when told by him that the troubles of the succession in France, aggravated by his intended invasion of Burgundy, would put an end for ever to the threat to Milan, and he kept responding to Maximilian's reiterated appeals to be supplied with the sinews of war. Maximilian frittered away the cash, put an end to the war which he had been paid to continue, and then loaded Ludovic with reproaches for neglecting to furnish him with the means to go on fighting. The connexion with Maximilian, in which he put his trust, actually contributed to bring about Ludovic's downfall, for it deprived him of the support of the Swiss, destroyed the last vestiges of his popularity among the subjects whom he was obliged to burden with taxes to satisfy Maximilian's incessant demands for money, and begot in him a self-confidence which made him deaf to every warning and blind to the plainest indications of approaching peril.

The Duke's sense of security, bred of his faith in the Emperor, was fostered by some of his diplomatic agents and intelligence officers, who either thought it prudent to prophesy smooth things, or were themselves deceived. In October 1498 an anonymous correspondent told him that the Emperor had often approached the French King's agents about peace, his suggestion being that Louis should undertake not to attack Milan during the life of Ludovic, who in return would pay a good indemnity, and promise to help in

the recovery of Naples and in a war against Venice. It was said that the King would not listen, and was bent on having Milan, but the writer did not believe it. 'With all the emphasis at my command', he said, 'I declare my own opinion to be that the King, if not pushed into the Milanese undertaking by some Italian power, will never take it up of his own accord, however keen he may pretend to be. On the one hand, there is scarcely a man among his lords who encourages him. On the other hand, the affair conflicts with his natural avarice, and he will never face the expenditure which such an enterprise would entail.' [1] Spies told the same story. The whole nobility, said one of these gentry, were vexed that the King should remain so obdurately set upon the Milanese affair, and some of them believed that the whole thing was really a pretence to afford an excuse for imposing taxes.[2] 'The French', said another, 'have little stomach for this business, saying that Italy is a burial-ground for them, and will be so all the more, if they have to fight the Emperor's forces as well, for they fear the Germans more than they fear the Devil himself.' [3] 'All the great seigneurs of France dislike the Italian expedition,' wrote a Milanese agent on 16th March 1499, 'and it is understood that they have unanimously decided to go to Court and see whether a way may not be found to turn the Most Christian King from his evil intention, and persuade him not to touch the business till his relations with the Emperor are established on a good footing. The Duke of Milan has very influential partisans and supporters in France.' [4]

It was generally believed in the French Court, Ludovic was told on 7th March 1499, that there would be no war that year. No binding agreement had as yet been come to with the Duke of Savoy; French troops were being used to help the Duke of Guelders; Maximilian was approaching Burgundy with an army, and, if successful against the Swiss, was likely to attack France; the Venetian forces, occupied in a Turkish war, would be unable to carry out their promises in Lombardy; and the French themselves had not yet made

[1] Pélissier, *Documents relatifs au règne de Louis XII et à sa politique en Italie*, p. 119. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 127.

[3] Pélissier, *Trois relations sur la situation de la France en 1498 et 1499*, p. 26.

[4] *Annales du Midi*, vol. vi, p. 165.

any adequate preparations for an invasion of Italy.[1] In May the Milanese ambassador in Rome, Cesare Guasco, reported that the Pope had it for certain that the French would make no move against Italy that year; and the opinion of His Holiness was shared by others, including the Bishop of Gurk.[2] On the 21st of the same month the Pope asked Guasco what news he had from France, and at the same time assured him that the French had greatly cooled off. 'You may believe me in this,' he said, 'for I know what I am talking about. You will not be troubled this year: perhaps a few men may come to Asti in pursuance of former plans, but they will not be in sufficient numbers to achieve anything material, and for the present you need not worry.' 'I replied', wrote Guasco, 'that the French might come whenever they pleased, for they would receive a suitable welcome, and would find a state of affairs something different from their expectation. Their threats caused small alarm, for Your Excellency's dominions were not to be captured merely by shouting. They would find Your Excellency well supplied with men-at-arms and money, strong in your fortified places, strong in the loving devotion of your subjects, to whom the French are more odious than is the Devil himself, and strong, too, in such support from Italy and abroad that the French could do you little harm. If, then, they were to come, they would be made to smart for it even more than during their former expeditions, inglorious as those attempts had been. His Holiness asked me how many men-at-arms Your Excellency had. I told him that you had 1,700 men-at-arms and 1,200 light horse, making as fine a company as had been seen in Italy for a long time. . . . His Holiness then asking me if you had enough money, I replied that, since the French left Italy, you had put aside a million in gold, . . . adding, to heighten his astonishment, that I had no idea what reserve Your Excellency might have formed before that. He said that even so the situation could not be thought to be wholly free from danger, for your soldiers would never stand against

[1] Pélissier, *Trois relations sur la situation de la France en 1498 et 1499*, pp. 14–15; *cf. Documents relatifs au règne de Louis XII et à sa politique en Italie*, p. 123.

[2] *Archivio della R. Società Romana di Storia Patria*, vol. xviii, pp. 171; 144, 177.

the French. That, I said, was disproved by past experience, especially in the Novara war, when Your Excellency's troops, though inferior in numbers, always held the French in check, and brought the war to an end which reflected very little credit upon the French.'[1]

How far the authors of these soporific assurances had contributed to Ludovic's insensibility might be judged by the tone of the Duke's conversation during the very hours when the shadows were deepening around him. The burden of his talk in the spring of the year 1499 was reported to the Cardinal of Rouen by one who had been in Milan and had conversed with the Duke. Ludovic had assured him that with the exception of Trivulzio he did not fear the French *condottieri*. The King of Naples had promised to send men-at-arms for his defence, and the King of the Romans would place his person and his kingdom at his disposal. The French would be suspicious of Venice, and that suspicion he would do his best to augment. As the Venetians were occupied with the Turk, and the Swiss were at war with the Empire, the expedition would not take place that year.[2] A month later, when the representative of the Signory asked him for a permit for French ambassadors proposing to visit Venice, his answer displayed the same complacency. 'What may be the business of these ambassadors at Venice, I do not know, but I am not alarmed, for my men and munitions are ready and everything is prepared. I am aware that the Signory has made an alliance with France for the purpose of robbing me of my territories, but the King of the Romans and the whole Empire are on my side, I can at any moment arrange a peace between them and the Swiss, and you may take my word for it that you Venetians will come very poorly out of it.'[3] Before the French got to Milan, he said on another occasion, the Turks would be in Venice.[4]

These sanguine expectations were soon to be put to the test of experience. A few days after the signature of the treaty with Venice King Federigo's envoys presented themselves at the French Court, and attempted to initiate a discussion about the Neapolitan sea-ports, which the Venetians

[1] Jean d'Auton, *Chroniques de Louis XII*, ed. R. de Maulde, vol. i, pp. 331–2.
[2] Sanuto, *I Diarii*, vol. ii, col. 728.
[3] *Ibid.*, col. 820.
[4] *Ibid.* col. 933.

had occupied during the recent war. Louis at once interrupted them: 'Let the Venetians keep what they have won in war! As for you, you may tell Signor Ludovic, when you see him, that we have decided to try conclusions with him; and see to it that you have quitted France within five days.'[1] When news of Swiss victories over Maximilian reached the French Court, the Cardinal of Rouen said to the Venetian ambassadors: 'Now is the time to begin our business, the Emperor being busy with the Swiss'.[2] Early in July Louis moved down to Lyons, in order that he might be nearer the scene of the impending conflict; on 24th July, in compliance with his request, the Signory resolved to terminate diplomatic relations with Ludovic; on 29th July their ambassador in Milan was recalled; and on 1st August the Milanese ambassador in Venice was dismissed.

'We are astonished that you should be recalled,' said Ludovic to the representative of the Signory during their final interview. 'The action of your Government is unjustifiable, for our relations have always been cordial, and in the continuance of such relations lies the best guarantee of security for both our States. But now we find in the Signory a very different disposition, seeing that they have allied themselves with France in defiance of existing treaties and of their obligations thereunder to the Pope, the Emperor, the Spanish sovereigns, and ourselves. This they have done to gain a part of our territory, and the shame of it cries to Heaven. If Pisa be alleged as an excuse, I answer that in that affair I have violated no undertakings, and have done nothing but seek the peace and quiet of Italy and the safety of my dominions. The alliance of the Signory with France is plain proof that they have designs on Pisa and covet their neighbours' goods. I am not afraid of the King of France: he has no just claim to my State; and, since he styles himself the Most Christian King, he ought rather to come to my aid against those who might wish to attack me. It is rumoured in Venice and Rome, and the Pope has alleged, that we are the cause of the Turk taking up arms; but the report is false. It is true that, on hearing of the alliance between Venice and France, we sent to the Turk to get him to caution

[1] *Annuaire-Bulletin de la Société de l'Histoire de France*, 1883, p. 280.

[2] Sanuto, *I Diarii*, vol. ii, col. 515.

the Signory against doing us an injury; but our envoy had barely started on his journey when the Turk began hostilities. In him the Signory will have on their hands an adversary who will be more formidable to them than the King of France will be to us, for we shall prevail against the King. The Signory, too, know quite well that any offence against us is also an offence against the Caesarean Majesty and the Holy Roman Empire, and they should be careful how they go against us. For our own part, unless constrained thereto by the pressure of some grievous injury, we will never go to war.'[1]

Such talk was idle now. The last word had been spoken, and the time had come when the voice of diplomacy would be silenced by the tramp of armies upon the march and the thunder of the guns.

[1] Sanuto, *I Diarii*, vol. ii, cols. 1003–4.

XVIII

THE CONQUEST OF MILAN

WHILST occupied by his diplomatic duel with the Duke of Milan, Louis XII had not neglected the work of financial and military preparation which had to be carried out before an invasion of the Duke's dominions could be thought of. In the military sphere he had to reconstitute an army which Charles VIII's Italian adventures had disorganized; in the fiscal domain a bankrupt Treasury was his legacy from the late improvident reign. To these matters he devoted himself from the outset with energy and success. As soon as he had assumed the reins of power, he made it plain to the Royal officials that a new spirit must be introduced into the fiscal administration, in which pillage and waste were to be replaced by order and economy. In response to one of his first requests for money he was told by the Treasurer whom he addressed that none was available; whereupon he observed: 'You must understand that I wish to be served, not like His late Majesty, King Charles VIII, but like your former master, King Louis XI, and then, no doubt, you will succeed in finding money for me': and the money was brought.[1] In the reports which I have already quoted there is evidence of the surprise with which foreign observers noted the new King's determination to curtail expenditure and suppress extravagance; and it is easy to guess at the feelings of a Court which, after being accustomed to Charles VIII's prodigality, was suddenly called upon to accommodate itself to the parsimony of the new ruler. Louis, who knew well that his policy would give rise to criticism and complaint, explained good-humouredly to the grumblers that, since a King who is going to war must needs have treasure, it was unfortunately necessary that allowances should be reduced, and the best advice he could give was that those who suffered by the process should learn to cut their coats according to the cloth.[2] 'If the King goes on as he has begun,' said an anonymous letter-writer in October 1498, 'refusing to give

[1] Pélissier, *Louis XII et Ludovic Sforza*, vol. i, p. 383.

[2] Pélissier, 'Documents sur la première année du règne de Louis XII', *Bulletin historique et philologique*, 1890, p. 108.

a penny to any living soul, he will amass a great treasure. I can assure you that nobody has had a farthing; in this respect French and Italians are treated alike; the poor Neapolitans have experienced the utmost difficulty in getting a penny of the allowances granted them by the late King; and what they have managed to squeeze out of him has been spent before they have got it. The French, to a man, have gone off; most of the gentlemen—indeed, I might say, all of them—have left for their own homes; and if I were to tell you how few people are left in this Court, you would never believe it.'[1] As a result of this frugality, and with the help of grants from the provincial Estates, the empty Treasury filled apace, and Louis spoke no more than the truth, when he told the Venetian ambassadors that he had plenty of money for an attack upon Milan. In April 1499 he calculated that he had funds enough for two years of war, and his military preparation was never adversely affected by any shortage of cash.[2]

In the army which he inherited from his predecessor there were in theory four companies of 100 lances, two of 60, five of 40, and one of 25; but of these companies one alone, and that the smallest, was up to full strength, whilst the rest were not merely deficient in numbers, but for the most part were also ill mounted and ill equipped. For these defects, and for the lack of organization of which they were the symptoms, the King set himself to provide a remedy with the same energy and thoroughness which he displayed in combating the financial chaos, and within six months of his accession he could claim to have 3,000 men-at-arms at his disposal with a complement of infantry and artillery adequate for serious operations. Before he had been on the throne a year, the military reorganization had been carried yet further: most of the small companies had been suppressed; many of those retained had been brought up to full strength; and stern measures had been taken to put an end to the indiscipline and licence of the soldiery, the last excuse for which was removed by a newly instituted system of regular and punctual pay. Side by side with the reconstitution of the

[1] Pélissier, 'Documents sur la première année du règne de Louis XII', *Bulletin historique et philologique*, 1890, p. 118.

[2] Pélissier, *Louis XII et Ludovic Sforza*, vol. i, pp. 381–3.

gendarmerie there went on a systematic recruiting campaign, which by the summer of 1499 had brought 18,000 Norman, Picard, and Gascon infantrymen to the colours, whilst a vigorous enrolment of foreign mercenaries had added a further 10,000 men, of whom one half was composed of Swiss.

As the summer of 1499 wore on, large detachments of the troops thus enlisted were concentrated at Lyons, and thence were gradually sent across the mountains to Asti. In the opinion of a learned historian of the expedition, it is impossible to define precisely the numbers and composition of the army which invaded Milan in 1499; probably it was composed of the six companies of 100 lances of which Ligny, d'Aubigny, his brother d'Auson, Trivulzio, Robinet de Framizelles, and Cesare Borgia were the captains; the 200 lances allotted to the Duke of Savoy; eleven smaller companies comprising 460 lances; gentlemen and archers of the Royal Guard, pensioners, and mounted arblasters to the number of about 1,000 men; and 17,000 infantry, of whom 5,000 were Swiss and 2,000 came from Savoy.[1] In July 1499 Ludovic learnt from 'a sure source'[2] that the King had changed his mind about the Italian expedition, intended to press it forward, and was making the following preparations: in addition to the 400 lances already at Asti he was sending thither another 400, with 200 gentlemen of the Household and 200 archers of the Guard; and d'Alègre, who commanded the 200 gentlemen, had received orders to march from Paris so that he might reach Lyons at the same time as the King, at which time and place 160 pensioners were also ordered to present themselves with full equipment. In addition to the mounted troops 15,000 foot were ordered, which were to include 3,000 Gascons, 5,000 Picards and Normans, and 4,000 Swiss, or, if Swiss could not be had, then a like number of infantrymen from Picardy, Normandy, Provence, or Dauphiné. The French infantry had for the most part been ready by the beginning of July, and some of them had actually started. The advance guard was to be commanded by d'Aubigny; then would come Ligny with the Cardinal of Rouen's nephew, Chaumont d'Amboise, and Robinet de Framizelles;

[1] *Ibid.*, pp. 383–6.

[2] 'Avisi . . . havuti da bon loco': *Trois relations sur la situation de la France en 1498 et 1499*, ed. Pélissier, pp. 15–16.

and the rear-guard would be under Trivulzio, who would be leader of the whole expedition. The artillery, which was to follow, would be formidable, and would consist of 130 guns. It was thought that the army could not be ready to take the field till September, but it might happen that it would be got ready sooner, as the King was pressing matters forward with the utmost energy.

The selection of a commander-in-chief had not been free from difficulty. Had Louis consulted his own inclination, he would probably have appointed his cousin, the Count of Ligny; and had he been guided by records of past service, he would have found it hard to resist the claims of La Trémoille, of Marshal de Gié, and of the veteran d'Aubigny, who had served with much distinction in the Neapolitan war. In the choice which he had actually made he had been influenced in large measure by political considerations. Gian Giacomo Trivulzio, who had gone over from the Aragonese to the French side in the early days of Charles VIII's invasion of Naples, possessed qualifications for the supreme command in the Milanese operations to which no Frenchman could lay claim. The personal enemy of the Duke of Milan, from whose dominions he had been obliged to flee, he would bring to his task an intimate knowledge of the country and its conditions, a great influence with all the malcontent subjects of the Duke, and the fierce energy of an exile grasping at a chance of restoration and revenge. He would also bring to it a useful acquaintance with Italian politics, valuable connexions in the peninsula, and an expert knowledge of the art of war as practised by its Italian exponents. He corresponded with the Signory of Venice, kept an agent in the Court of Rome, was on terms of intimate friendship with the Marquis of Mantua, and during his Governorship of Asti had established relations with all the elements in the Swiss population which were hostile to Ludovic. Like his friend, the Marquis of Mantua, he enjoyed a considerable reputation as a soldier: unhappily, he also resembled him in following the moral code of the *condottieri*, in which honour and fidelity were of small account. Despite the generosity with which Louis treated him, he thought it no shame to seek furtively for more lucrative employment under some other Government, and he abused the King's confidence by

attempting to use the Governorship of Asti for his own private ends. In June 1498, upon the pretext of securing liberty to carry out any commands which he might receive from Louis, he took upon himself to denounce the existing truce between France and Milan, and then intimated to the Milanese Government that he would get the truce revived, if Ludovic would restore his confiscated possessions in the Milanese. It might be politic to entrust to this ambitious self-seeker the conduct of the forthcoming campaign, but it could scarcely be hoped that he would win affection or respect from the high-spirited gentlemen who would march under his command.[1]

The defensive preparations of the Duke of Milan showed how little that sanguine ruler had grasped the trend of events or the greatness of his danger. Confident in his own wealth and prestige and in the efficacy of Imperial protection, he dawdled on into the summer of 1499 without making any serious attempt to keep pace with the preparations of France and Venice. Yet the military condition of the Milanese was not such as to warrant much complacency. On paper, indeed, the Ducal forces were not inconsiderable, but in fact they were altogether inadequate to the coming emergency. Few companies were up to full strength; the men were ill equipped, ill mounted, and ill paid; the fortified places were antiquated and decayed, poorly supplied, and insufficiently garrisoned; and the artillery was inadequate. As the Milanese had never been able to produce a reliable *gendarmerie*, the cavalry was almost entirely of foreign origin, and was bound to Ludovic by nothing stronger than a contract of mercenary service. In consequence of the treaty with France, by which the Cantons had undertaken that their men should not serve against the French King, Ludovic had experienced great difficulty in providing his infantry with the almost indispensable stiffening of Swiss troops; and, as with the Germans promised by the Emperor, the troops he did recruit in Switzerland arrived too late. Most of his officers were *condottieri*, and events would show that his generals were incompetent, jealous of each other, and untrustworthy. The Duke's favourite, Galeazzo di San Severino, who was to be

[1] Pélissier, 'La politique de Trivulze au début du règne de Louis XII,' *Revue des questions historiques*, vol. lvi.

in supreme command, possessed few soldierly qualities; 'his thoughtless incapacity, apparent in his preparation of the defence, was to be revealed yet more clearly in the conduct of war';[1] and Ludovic's irrational preference for him was the more unfortunate in that his relatives, the Count of Caiazzo and Fracassa di San Severino, whose fragile loyalty could withstand few shocks, were encouraged in their inclination towards treasonable practices by the wound which it inflicted on their pride.

Ludovic's plan of campaign, so far as he had formed one, was to act on the defensive, directing his main effort against the Venetians, from whom he apprehended the more serious danger. He believed almost up to the end that the French could not be ready to attack him that year, and even after the error of that view had become obvious, he still thought that their effort would be made with small forces and would quickly be spent. Apart, therefore, from some strengthening of the fortifications towards Asti and of some belated and ineffectual recruiting in Burgundy and Switzerland, no serious defensive measures had been begun on the western front so late as the beginning of July 1499. Carried out precipitately at the last moment, when the French army was already concentrated at Asti, the steps then taken achieved little but to add to the confusion of what was virtually a surprise. In the last days of July the Emperor's envoy in Milan wrote in cypher to his master, to impress upon him the gravity of the situation; and these dispatches, intercepted by the Venetians and carried to the Signory, are summarized in Sanuto's *Diaries*.[2] 'The help you say you are sending will be too late, for the Duke is in a bad way. Galeazzo di San Severino declares that with the forces at his disposal he can resist neither the French nor yet Venice with all her wealth. The Duke talks of fleeing. He has at most 8,000 good cavalry, 3,000 light horse, and 12,000 foot. Venice means to attack him in the middle of August; Savoy and Signor Constantine are against him; the people are terrified; and, as soon as one place has been captured by the French, the others will yield, partly because the people are ill disposed towards the Duke, and partly because the King of France has given orders that

[1] Pélissier, *Louis XII et Ludovic Sforza*, vol. i, p. 452.
[2] Vol. ii, cols. 998–9.

in the first place which offers resistance every one is to be put to the sword.'

The forecast was gloomy, but it was no gloomier than the facts warranted. 'The three armies destined to contend in an unequal struggle for the possession of Lombardy found themselves face to face. One, the chief instrument of conquest, had been carefully organized and long since made ready; . . . another, its auxiliary, had also been prepared well in advance; . . . the third, the adversary of these two, had barely been got together, when the territory which it was to defend was invaded by its rivals. In the two former were compact masses, well led, acting on a common plan, obeying one sovereign will; the latter consisted of scattered garrisons and of two unconnected bodies of troops, hesitatingly led, acting on a plan hurriedly conceived and repeatedly modified, affected by all the uncertainties of a weak and wavering will; in none of the three was there any patriotism or national sentiment, but among the invaders there was a blind loyalty and absolute devotion to the sovereign, whilst among the invaded there was nothing but a shadow of obedience, and that an obedience in no wise founded upon respect; and whereas the armies of France and Venice had the advantage of the offensive, in the Milanese army there was a dim but growing sense of the futility of resistance and the certainty of defeat.' [1]

Early in August the French were ready to take the field, and on the 10th of the month Trivulzio marched out from Asti at the head of his troops. After capturing two small and ill-fortified posts on the Milanese frontier, he sent a detachment under his nephew, Zuam Francesco Trivulzio, to reduce a place called Spigno on the Savona road, the possession of which would secure him against the risk of an attack in rear from the direction of Genoa. The fortifications of Spigno had lately been overhauled, and the place was believed to be impregnable; but it fell immediately before the French, who slew a hundred of the garrison, and razed the walls. This done, Trivulzio was free to enter Milanese territory, and on 11th August sent to demand the capitulation of Rocca d'Arazzo, a fair-sized town with a strong castle situate on the bank of the Tanaro some four or

[1] Pélissier, *Louis XII et Ludovic Sforza*, vol. i, p. 465.

five miles from Asti. Confident in the strength of his walls and in his garrison of four or five hundred men, the Governor treated the herald with contumely, and sent him back with the message that Arazzo would know how to defend itself, and did not intend to surrender. At eight o'clock on the following morning the French marched on Arazzo, reached the place by noon, and before night had dug their trenches and got their guns into position. A vigorous bombardment on the morning of the 13th made a practicable breach in the walls, and by the evening of the same day the place was in the hands of the attackers, who sacked the town, destroyed the castle, and massacred a good many of the defenders.

Opposite Arazzo, on the other side of the Tanaro, lay the town and castle of Annone, admirably placed for purposes of defence and held by a garrison of 700 men. After receiving the surrender of Incisa, which offered no resistance, the French crossed the Tanaro on 15th August, encamped that evening in a swamp near Annone, and early on the morning of the 16th began their bombardment. Stronger and better situated than the castle at Arazzo, the citadel of Annone held out for three days, but on 19th August was obliged to capitulate. As at Arazzo, the town was plundered, the citadel razed, and the garrison put to the sword.

After Annone, which covered the approaches to Alessandria, came the turn of Voghera and Valenza, which guarded the Po, and of Tortona, which commanded the Piacenza road. Having moved on from Annone, occupied Solero, and detailed a force to march against Vercelli, Trivulzio on 22nd August appeared before Voghera, which surrendered, on the 24th occupied Tortona, where the citizens refused to attempt a resistance which might expose them to butchery, and then approached Valenza, which was now the only strong place left to hinder an attack on Alessandria. More fortunate than the other places, which Galeazzo di San Severino had done nothing either to garrison or to relieve, Valenza had lately had its garrison strengthened by an addition of 1,500 men, drawn from the Ducal Guard. It made some show of resistance, but here as elsewhere the French artillery was too much for the nerves of Italian troops, and after a short cannonade Valenza followed the example of its neighbours, and hoisted the white flag. Thereupon Bassi-

gnana, Castelnuovo, Sale, Pontecurone, and such other places as had not yet capitulated, promptly opened their gates.

These losses were fatal to Alessandria, the pivot of Milanese resistance on the western front. It was to Alessandria that Ludovic looked to hold up the French, until he could collect an army and obtain assistance from Maximilian, and it was in that city that the main Milanese forces had been concentrated. Two thousand men withdrawn from smaller places had already been sent to reinforce the original garrison, which consisted of 800 men-at-arms, 400 light horse, and 3,500 infantry; and on 19th August another contingent of 2,000 German foot was thrown into the city. The Count of Caiazzo was also recalled from the Adda district, where he had been posted to oppose the forces of Venice, and was ordered to move on Pavia in support of the army in Alessandria. But these measures were rendered nugatory by incompetent leadership and the disaffection of the civilian population—a disaffection much increased by the dislike which Alessandria entertained for its tyrannical Governor, Lucio Malvezzi, by the contempt with which it regarded Galeazzo di San Severino, and by its dread of the French. The policy of 'frightfulness' enjoined by Louis upon his troops had produced an immense effect in Lombardy, and Alessandria, in the mood to believe every rumour, had persuaded itself that Trivulzio would be generous, if greeted by surrender, but implacable, if met by resistance.

Meanwhile the French were advancing, doubtful whether to besiege so strong a city or to mask the place and press on against the capital. Trivulzio favoured the latter course, but was vehemently opposed by Ligny, who succeeded in persuading him that the reduction of Alessandria was necessary. Accordingly on 25th August the French army encamped before the city, and after the capture of a suburb began to bombard the town. The garrison, which seemed resolved upon a vigorous defence, had already made some damaging sorties, when in the night of the 28th–29th the situation was suddenly changed by the flight of Galeazzo di San Severino in company with the Governor, the principal officers, and nearly all the mounted troops. The town then surrendered to the French. Of the troops which Galeazzo had left behind, some remained at their posts, and became prisoners of

war; others attempted to flee in the tracks of their fugitive leader, but were pursued by the enemy, and, finding their retreat cut off by the action of Galeazzo in destroying the bridge over the Po, perished in their efforts to cross the river or were cut down by their pursuers. Why Galeazzo should suddenly have fled from Alessandria is a riddle which has never been solved. Perhaps he realized that the town had become untenable, and decided on his own responsibility to effect the withdrawal to Pavia which he had advised some six or seven days before; or Ludovic, in determining at last to adopt that advice, may have told him to escape with his best troops, and to keep his retreat secret, lest the townspeople should decline to let him go. Some have supposed that he lost his head in face of the hostility of the population and the difficulties of the defence. Others have thought that he gave up hope, when he saw that the dilatory tactics of the Count of Caiazzo afforded no prospect of succour. Many have regarded him as a mere traitor, who had sold himself to the French. His subsequent conduct seems to conflict with this hypothesis, for he did attempt to throw himself and his men-at-arms into Pavia, which the Duke's advisers had always regarded as the pivot of the second line of Milanese resistance. It was not his fault that Pavia would have none of him, telling him, when he sought admission, that 'the place for soldiers is in the field, not in a town, where they merely make trouble'.[1]

To add to Ludovic's difficulties, the Venetians also had now taken the field. Aware that the enemy's original plan had been to concentrate the bulk of his forces on his eastern front, and not disposed to place over-much confidence in the good faith of their allies, the Signory had been in no hurry to involve themselves in hostilities, preferring to wait until the French were committed beyond the possibility of withdrawal. They thought, too, that their own task would then become more easy, and in that expectation they were justified by the event, since Ludovic recalled his general with troops and guns to go to the aid of Alessandria, and then set about improvising new defensive measures with a haste which made confusion inevitable. On its eastern borders, as elsewhere in the Duchy, the civilian population, groaning

[1] Pélissier, *Louis XII et Ludovic Sforza*, vol. ii, pp. 36–7.

under the burden of excessive taxation, was hostile to the Duke, and would do nothing to aid the defence. Thus the Venetians, after crossing the Oglio on 25th August, took Caravaggio, overran all the open country in the Ghiara d'Adda region, made raids as far as Lodi, and then sat down to wait until Cremona, rich, populous, and disaffected, should offer its submission. That Venice should thus confine her action to the seizure of her promised spoils argued a selfishness or a timidity of which her partners felt entitled to complain. 'You Venetians', said Louis a few weeks later, 'are wise in council and abounding in riches, but you are lacking in spirit and courage in war. When we French go to war, we are resolved that the issue shall be either victory or death.'[1]

The fall of Alessandria produced terror throughout the Milanese, and among the places on the French line of advance there ensued a general scramble to forestall attack by voluntary surrender. From Alessandria the French marched northwards to Mortara, there to treat for the surrender of Pavia, and after the submission of Piacenza on one side and the loss of Vigevano and Abbiategrasso on the other, Pavia, which had refused admission to Galeazzo, was unlikely to display an obdurate temper. In Milan the situation was fast becoming desperate. Undermined by administrative and financial chaos, rising taxes, illegal confiscations, and arbitrary arrests, the Duke's authority vanished before the rising tide of unresisted invasion. The soldiery clamoured for their arrears of pay; the partisans of Trivulzio patrolled the streets in arms; the houses of Ducal Councillors were sacked by the mob; and on 30th August the Treasurer of the Duchy, Antonio da Landriano, universally detested as the instrument of Ducal extortions, was murdered in the streets. Fearing for his own safety, Ludovic shut himself up in the Castello with all the troops he could collect and with munitions and guns hastily brought in from neighbouring fortresses. He knew that the game was up, and on 31st August bade his brother Ascanio seek safety with his two young sons and part of his treasure. Before following them, he tried a last throw, and appealed to the citizens to rally to his aid. They told him that resistance was impossible, and that Milan

[1] Sanuto, *I Diarii*, vol. iii, col. 11.

intended to offer its submission to the French. Then he, too, fled, slipping away in the early morning of 2nd September in company with Galeazzo di San Severino and other Ghibelline leaders, and taking with him his regalia and the rest of his treasure. Pursued by the French, who at Como nearly captured him, he made his way by Bellaggio, the Valtelline, and Bormio to the Tyrol, and halted at Meran, there to await the result of an appeal to his ally and suzerain, the Emperor.

The Duke gone, his capital, in which a Committee of Public Safety had already been elected, set to work to cope with the crisis. In some quarters there was a disposition to declare for the young son of Gian Galeazzo, whom Ludovic had evicted, and to defy the invaders; but a mass meeting of citizens on 5th September revealed an overwhelming preponderance of opinion in favour of coming to terms with the French. The meeting resolved to acquaint Trivulzio with the terms upon which Milan would be willing to capitulate. The city was to do fealty and homage to Louis XII and to pay an annual tribute; it was to be governed by its own Council, and its privileges were to be confirmed; Milanese merchants were to be granted commercial facilities in France; should Louis die without leaving a male heir, Milan was to become free and independent; the French troops were not to be quartered on the city or lodged within a radius of ten miles of it; and the castle of the Porta Zobia was to be razed to the ground, with an undertaking that it should never be rebuilt.[1] To suggest such conditions might be soothing to the pride of a great city, but there was no possibility that they could be enforced, and in fact the keys had already been taken to Trivulzio, who on 6th September rode in with Ligny at the head of a small body of horse amid welcoming cries of 'Viva Trivulzio!'. Orders were at once given that no one should enter or leave the city without a permit from the French leaders, and the keys of the gates were entrusted to French officers. The French army being encamped beneath the walls, strict measures were also taken to protect Milan against the excesses of the soldiery, and offenders were punished with impartial severity, Trivulzio ordering the execution, not only of common soldiers caught in acts of

[1] Romanin, *Storia documentata di Venezia*, vol. v, pp. 113–14.

larceny, but even of a French nobleman, who had publicly insulted a Milanese lady.

There remained the Castello, which had not been included in the surrender of the city, but still held out, presenting a formidable obstacle. In fleeing from his capital Ludovic had found comfort in the thought that this great fortress could be relied upon to maintain its resistance until he could enlist the help of the Emperor and return with a new army, to drive out the invaders. Its defence had been entrusted to Bernardino da Corte, one of the Duke's favourites, and every precaution had been taken which ingenuity could suggest for facilitating his task. The garrison was ample, being composed of three thousand men; the guns were numerous and good; there was a huge supply of powder; and there was an enormous stock of supplies. In case anything should have been forgotten or any emergency should arise, an elaborate system of signalling had been devised, by means of which Bernardino da Corte could communicate with the Duke's adherents in Milan. Orders had been given that, whatever the city might do, the castle should hold out at all costs; there was not the slightest doubt that it could hold out for a month; and within that time the Duke would return at the head of a German army to effect its relief.

The existence of this great fortress raised difficult questions for the French commander-in-chief. So long as the Ducal flag should float over its battlements, the French conquest would remain incomplete. Yet it was by no means certain that so powerful a stronghold could be reduced by force, and an unsuccessful attack might jeopardize French prestige. Anxious, therefore, to gain possession of the castle by peaceful means, Trivulzio told the Provisional Government of Milan that, if they could induce the castle to surrender, he would withdraw his forces from the city, but, if the castle were to hold out, he would be obliged to occupy Milan, and could not be responsible for the consequences to its people. Alarmed by this threat, the Provisional Government sent two of their number to Bernardino da Corte, to tell him that the French had occupied all the routes by which aid from Germany could approach, to beg that he would spare the city the sufferings entailed by a resistance that must in the end prove futile, and to suggest that a

unique opportunity presented itself for winning high favour with the King of France. Finding that Bernardino da Corte did not spurn this overture, Trivulzio himself sent him an envoy next day, to reinforce by menaces the dictates of prudence and the promptings of greed: if he were obliged to capture the castle by assault, he would give orders that every man within it should be put to the sword; and the captain might have forty-eight hours in which to consider his reply. This time-limit having expired on 8th September, Trivulzio at once began his preparations for a bombardment, and by 11th September had his guns in position and a force of 10,000 men ready to invest the castle. On the 13th a second appeal was made to Bernardino da Corte by the citizens of Milan, imploring him to treat. He listened, promised to reply in the evening, and held out a definite hope that the reply would not be unsatisfactory. By nightfall an agreement for capitulation was signed, and Bernardino da Corte's children were in the hands of the French as hostages. It was stipulated that there should be an armistice for twelve days, during which time the Duke of Milan should be informed that the castle would be lost, unless he should send relief; if at the expiration of the armistice no definite promise of succour should have been received, the castle was to be surrendered; and in that event the Milanese captain and his lieutenants were to be rewarded handsomely by the King of France. During the next two days further negotiations were carried on with Bernardino da Corte, and on 17th September the castle was handed over by him to the French. The traitor who had surrendered it without waiting for a shot to be fired or any sort of attack to be made and without affording to the master who had trusted him any chance of sending relief, marched from the scene of his shame rich beyond the dreams of avarice, but stripped of that which money could not buy, and for the loss of which no material gain could ever make amends.

As soon as the King of France heard that the castle was in his power, he set out from Lyons, to take possession of his conquest. Reaching Vercelli on 21st September, he halted at Novara on the 23rd, slept at Vigevano on the 26th, and on 2nd October entered Pavia, where the streets were decorated, bands played, and the clergy came in procession to

greet their new ruler; 'but what pleased the troops more was that there were set under awnings tables laden with meats, at which every man might take his fill.'[1] To Pavia came representatives from all the powers of Italy, to congratulate Louis on his success; there were four ambassadors from Venice, three from Florence, and a deputation of twenty-four gentlemen from the city of Genoa; Pisa and Siena sent their envoys; and hither, too, came the lord of Bologna and his son and a Cardinal Legate representing Pope Alexander VI. On 6th October, when all had arrived, the King started out from Pavia betimes in the morning, dined at the Certosa, and in the afternoon entered Milan in state. The ambassadors of Venice rode in his train, and in the evening posted off to the Signory a glowing account of the triumphal day.

His Majesty, they wrote,[2] stopped at a Dominican convent, to change his clothes, and came forth in a tunic of cloth of gold, over which he wore a mantle of white damask lined with grey fur and having an ermine collar; on his head was a biretta that matched the mantle; and all the trappings of his horse were of gold. Trivulzio, accompanied by the leading nobles and citizens of Milan, then approached, and with appropriate addresses presented the keys of the city, two gilt bâtons, and a naked sword. The sword His Majesty kept, carrying it in his own hand; the bâtons he passed on, one to Marshal de Gié, and the other to Trivulzio. Then the Great Chamberlain marshalled the procession. The King rode under a golden baldacchino; eight of the chief men of Milan, mounted on horseback, carried it; and sixteen others, all in rich attire, rode by the side. Around the baldacchino was grouped the whole College of Doctors, who were clad in scarlet robes with collars, and wore hats trimmed with fur. Behind His Majesty rode the Legate and Cardinal della Rovere; then His Eminence of Rouen and the illustrious Duke of Savoy; then we ambassadors came; behind us rode the illustrious Dukes of Ferrara and Valentinois; then the Marquis of Mantua with the Marquis of Montferrat, and the Marquis of Saluzzo with Signor Constantine; then the

[1] Prato, 'Storia di Milano,' in *Archivio Storico Italiano*, Series I, vol. iii, p. 226.

[2] Sanuto, *I Diarii*, vol. iii, cols. 24–5; and *cf. Lettere del Conte Baldassare Castiglione*, ed. P. A. Serassi, vol. ii, pp. 3–5.

ambassadors of Florence, Siena, Lucca, and Pisa; and finally a great company whom no man could number. Before His Majesty went five hundred men of the Royal Guard, armed with lances and axes, and three hundred men-at-arms on horseback, all picked troops, and every man admirably equipped. All the French lords rode in front of His Majesty, the nearest to him being Trivulzio, Ligny, and Gié. The gaily decorated streets were filled by a great concourse of people, who showed the utmost pleasure and delight. In this solemn state His Majesty proceeded to the cathedral, there to return thanks for the victory which had graced his arms.

The Venetian ambassadors saw with official eyes, and recorded the official view. A different impression was left upon the minds of unofficial spectators, as is shown by the account which one of them wrote on this same evening to his brother in Venice. After describing how the King had made his entry that afternoon, riding a fine bay courser, which was caparisoned in gold, and pirouetted all the time, this writer went on to declare that the King's reception had not been good. Few cries of 'France!' had greeted him; by no means as many gentlemen as had been expected to do so had turned out; and, apart from what had been done by the Trivulzio family, there had been little shouting, bell-ringing, or feasting. The reception accorded to the Venetians had been markedly hostile; their appearance had evoked angry cries of 'You dogs'; and they dared not leave their lodgings, the Milanese laying upon Venice the blame for the ruin of their country. 'The King', they say, 'has made his first meal at our expense, but you Venetians will provide his next repast.'[1]

Louis went back to France early in November, after spending a month in his new conquest, during which time he made provision for its future government. Thinking that the people of Milan would rather be ruled by one of themselves

[1] 'E dicono: Habiamo dato da disnar al re, vui li dareti da cena, zoè Venitiani': Sanuto, *I Diarii*, vol. iii, col. 25. The prophecy seems to have originated with the fugitive Duke, Burchard having recorded under the date of 4th September: 'Nuntiatum est . . . illustrem D. Ludovicum ducem Mediolani . . . dixisse ante recessum suum ex Mediolano oratori dominii Venetorum: "Vos, domini Veneti, mittitis mihi regem Francie ad prandium. Certifico firmiter vos eum habituros ad cenam"': *Diarium*, ed. Thuasne, vol. ii, p. 562.

than by a foreigner, he placed the supreme military and political power in the hands of Trivulzio, whom he appointed Lieutenant-Governor of the Duchy. The ordinance by which this office was created also established machinery for the administration of the country. The old Ducal Councils were abolished, and in place of them there was instituted a new supreme tribunal, called a Senate, which was to be composed in part of Frenchmen and in part of Italians. The King, who looked to this body, not only to act as the supreme judicial authority, but also to control an executive whose power he would not be present in person to curb, entrusted it with powers and privileges which the old Councils had never enjoyed. Senators were appointed for life, and could not be removed except by the vote of the Senate itself; no Royal edicts were to have the force of law, until the Senate had registered them; and from its decisions there was to be no appeal. Nothing could have proved more clearly the real desire of the new master of the Milanese that his conquest should be governed with fairness and moderation.

In Milan, however, as in Naples a few years earlier, the good intentions of the sovereign were defeated by the force of circumstances, the unwisdom of his subordinates, and the licence of the troops. Milanese opinion resented the cession of Cremona and the Ghiara d'Adda to Venice, by which the Duchy was despoiled for the benefit of an ancient enemy. Trivulzio, disliked by the nobles as a Guelf, was detested by the people for his harsh and arbitrary ways. Partly on that account and partly by reason of the absurd expectations which had everywhere been formed, there was great disillusionment, resulting in general discontent. When the French first came, the Milanese believed that 'they would be the best treated people in the world, for it was said that the custom in France was to pay nothing but one *carlino* a hearth, and to be otherwise exempt from taxes and *gabelles*. . . . When the first excitement had subsided, every one thought himself most fortunate to have got rid of that great tyrant, il Moro, and to have been transferred to such a king as the King of France, supposing that henceforth he would live in liberty, pay no taxes, and suffer under no *gabelles*'.[1] When

[1] Ambrogio da Paullo, 'Cronaca Milanese', in *Miscellanea di Storia Italiana*, vol. xiii, p. 123.

it was found that the French had abolished only some of the taxes, and meant to collect the others, opinion in Milan underwent a sharp reaction, and the new Government was viewed with a hatred more intense even than that with which the old had been regarded. In their fury at being taxed at all, the people forgot that they were no longer taxed as much; and their sense of injury was deepened by the rigour of Trivulzio's fiscal administration. They complained, too, of Trivulzio's want of fairness, declaring that he reserved all the honours and lucrative posts for his Guelf supporters, and neglected or oppressed his Ghibelline opponents. His authority was detested by the nobles, who could not brook the supremacy of an equal; and jealousy of the King's Minister fed the wrath already aroused in their breasts by the action of the King himself in refusing to confirm the lavish grants by which Ludovic just before his flight had sought to win them back to his side.

The flames of discontent thus ignited were fanned by the natural antipathy between the victors and the vanquished—the scorn of the one for a people which had offered no resistance, the contemptuous dislike of the other for a race whom they regarded as insolent and licentious barbarians. As early as October, before the King had left, Sanuto learned that there was trouble brewing. The French, he was told, were a dirty people, bestial in their habits, and licentious. The chief gentlemen in Milan, especially the Visconti, were disgusted by French insolence. The cession of the Ghiara d'Adda to Venice was much resented, and the King had been told that, if he wished to maintain himself against Ludovic, he ought not to divide his State. Seeing their dislike of the French and their inclination to rise in favour of Ludovic, the King had tried to remove some of them from Milan and send them off to France; and this had increased the bad feeling. On 28th October there was rioting in the streets, the revenue offices being attacked, and a man whom the French wished to arrest was rescued by the crowd. The King was obliged to intervene, and made a conciliatory speech. It was not, he said, with any intention of tyrannizing over the country that he had come to occupy it at great cost to himself. He was now about to go away, but once every year he would return and revisit them. He would leave Trivulzio behind as his

Lieutenant-Governor, and he exhorted them to pay the taxes, since they would be payable, not to himself or his officials, but to their own fellow-citizens.[1] By November Girolamo Morone, who was personally favourable to the French, had become convinced that their rule could not endure. 'Everybody', he wrote, 'is demanding the Sforzas back; the cession of Cremona and the Ghiara d'Adda to the Venetians is an improper spoliation of the Duchy; Trivulzio, the King's Lieutenant, gives free rein to the rancour of the exiles, pitilessly oppresses the Ghibelline nobles, and gives not a thought to those by means of whom he has triumphed; the people are disappointed in all the hopes they had formed; the lust and tyranny of the French soldiery are extreme; and the quartering of them on private houses makes this tyranny worse than any that could be imagined.'[2]

How the Gascons had behaved in Milan, wrote a Milanese chronicler, was 'known only to God and to their long-suffering hosts. But this at least is known to me, that they paid respect neither to the sanctity of places nor to the quality of persons, but committed every kind of iniquity, gaming, stealing, blaspheming, and whoremongering to the top of their bent; even in the middle of the public squares drinking booths were set up, any person who cared to do so being permitted to open one without paying any dues'.[3] A Venetian writer declared that the insolence of the French defied description, and that they behaved as though to insult an Italian was a service acceptable to God. 'As a result of their haughty and insolent ways the people of Milan became excessively discontented. . . . It would take more time, and occupy more space than I have at my disposal, if I were to attempt to describe the wickednesses of the French in Milan, their insults, incests, rapine, immorality, and violence. And, indeed, the extent of their wickednesses can scarcely even be conjectured. But any man who is familiar with the character of the French will know that the half has not been told him, and will readily believe that the unhappy people of Milan

[1] Sanuto, *I Diarii*, vol. iii, cols. 31, 37, 44, 48.

[2] G. de Leva, *Storia documentata di Carlo V in correlazione all' Italia*, vol. i, pp. 65–6.

[3] Prato, 'Storia di Milano,' in *Archivio Storico Italiano*, Series I, vol. iii, p. 224.

could not call their souls their own. For they were driven from their own houses, and had to stand by without saying a word, while the French took their pleasure with their wives and daughters, and this not in one or two isolated cases, but in every family in Milan, whatsoever its condition. In the streets, too, many acts of violence were done. By reason of these things there was grievous discontent in Milan, and the people loudly complained.'[1]

With the coming of the New Year, Milan stood on the brink of revolution. Aware of the ferment, and afraid of it, the French essayed repressive measures, prohibiting public meetings and political speeches; but the chief result was to intensify the popular indignation. Trivulzio himself lost confidence in his ability to control the situation, and by remitting large sums of money to France at once revealed and augmented the weakness of his position. The example demoralized his adherents, of whom many deserted him. In January a plot was discovered for seizing the castle. The whole city was in a state of commotion, wrote the Venetian Secretary, and the houses of the Ghibellines were full of armed men. The Captain of Justice had tried to visit the house of a Ghibelline leader, for the purpose of discovering whether any of these armed men were secreted within it. The owner met him at the door, and said: 'What do you want, Captain? If you like to come in and search, come; but I warn you that you will do so at your own risk': whereupon the Captain had thought better of it.[2] When Trivulzio a few days later took refuge in the castle, Milan was left in the hands of rebels whom the French were powerless to control.

In this posture of affairs much would depend upon the ability of the fugitive Duke to grasp the chance which was held out to him by the revulsion of feeling in his capital. When we took our leave of Ludovic, we parted from him in the early days of his flight. That flight had been perilous; he had narrowly escaped the pursuing French at Como, and had been in constant danger of arrest at the hands of his own subjects, who coveted his treasure. Many of his escort had deserted him on the road, and part of his treasure had been

[1] Priuli, 'Chronicon Venetum,' in Muratori, *Rerum Italicarum Scriptores*, vol. xxiv, pp. 97, 122. [2] Sanuto, *I Diarii*, vol. iii, col. 93.

stolen. Considerable sums had also been paid away in bribes, to keep open the way of retreat. Tortured by gout, and shaken by fever, the Duke himself was sick in body and sore in heart. He had lost health, wealth, and throne; his supporters had abandoned him; the treachery of his trusted friend, Bernardino da Corte, had ruined all his hopes; and in place of a life of dignified and cultured ease he must expect the lot of the exile with its sadness, its discomforts, and its humiliation. For a time he kept up his spirits, and it was not till Bernardino da Corte's surrender of the castle of Milan that his optimism failed him. He had fled from his dominions with a fixed resolve to continue the struggle and in the confident hope that he would quickly return. That hope was shattered by Bernardino da Corte's treachery, which altered the whole aspect of affairs, since by ruling out the possibility of a *coup de main* it added enormously to the difficulties of a restoration. Another blow befell the Duke in the discovery that, if he were to look to Maximilian for effective aid, he would look in vain. Maximilian received him kindly, but more than sympathy was required, and would not be met with at the hands of that variable and necessitous ruler. If Milan was to be won back, Ludovic must rely on his own resources and his own efforts.

He had spent but a few weeks in exile, when reports began to reach him of the unpopularity of Trivulzio's government and of the detestation with which the French were regarded throughout the Duchy. By the end of October Milanese gentlemen were already beginning to slip away from their homes, to join their exiled Prince. Of those who remained behind, many of the most influential opened a secret correspondence with him, and, as the weeks passed, bringing relaxation of French discipline and growth of French licence, he was implored with ever-increasing earnestness to come quickly, to come anyhow, to come at all costs. If he would but show himself, his correspondents told him, all Lombardy would welcome him with open arms, and, as soon as he should appear, the country would rise as one man to purge itself of its barbarian tormentors.

Under the stimulus of these appeals Ludovic pressed forward the military measures which had already been taken in hand. Maximilian having given leave for a recruiting appeal

in Burgundy, five hundred *landsknechte* were enrolled in that district. In Switzerland events had taken a turn highly favourable to the Sforza cause. After Ludovic's flight from Milan his able envoy to the Cantons, Galeazzo Visconti, had redoubled his efforts to end the Swabian war, and largely as a result of his mediation a peace between the Emperor and the Confederacy was signed on 22nd October. The service was the more appreciated in that the Swiss at the time were very sore at their treatment by the King of France. Louis, they thought, had supported them but feebly in their war; the guns he had promised them had not come till the war was nearly at an end; the Swiss troops whom he had hired for the invasion of Lombardy had been badly paid during the campaign, and after the victory had been left unpaid or handed over to Cesare Borgia; and all requests for commercial privileges in the Duchy had been disregarded. In Switzerland, therefore, the eagerness to serve against Louis XII had become as great as the previous eagerness to enlist under his standards, and in spite of some official hesitation caused by the subsisting alliance with France the Sforza recruiting agents were able without any real difficulty to enroll as many men as they pleased. By the middle of January some eight or ten thousand Swiss mercenaries were marching to join Ludovic and his Burgundians at Coire.

Thereupon, without waiting for further supplies of men, Ludovic and Ascanio decided to strike while the iron was hot, and to set out with such troops as were already assembled. On 20th January 8,000 men entered the Valtelline, where they were well received and furnished with supplies and means of transport. The advance guard moved on Chiavenna, and occupied it. Galeazzo di San Severino, setting out from Bormio a few days later, took Tirano on the 31st; Bellinzona and Lecco hoisted the Ducal flag; and Domodossola, after an internal struggle, in which the partisans of the French were defeated, also admitted Ludovic's troops. Ligny meanwhile was in Como, where the French were more than usually unpopular, and against which the main forces of the invaders were directed. Unable to hold the place, the French commander abandoned it on 1st February, and upon his retirement the whole northern frontier passed into the hands of the invaders.

Tidings of these events speedily reached Milan, and produced a great commotion amongst its suffering citizens. Trivulzio, who had been warned of Ludovic's preparations, had done what he could to meet the menace. French troops had been ordered to be at their posts; Yves d'Alègre, who was co-operating with Cesare Borgia in Romagna, had been told to return at top speed; reinforcements had been sent to Como; and additional troops had been brought into the capital. Realizing that he could not hold down Milan by force, Trivulzio had attempted negotiation with the Ghibelline leaders, who were distributing arms to the people; but such chance of acceptance as the overtures may have ever possessed was shattered by the news of Ludovic's successes. He then essayed an appeal to the people, dwelling upon the power of the King of France and the folly of resistance. 'I am now an old man', he said, 'who can have but a few years to live, and my one object in coming back has been to end my days in Milan. It seems that you desire the return of him who already has sucked you dry, and who, if he should again come back, will complete your ruin. My endeavours have all been for your welfare, and I have never approved of increasing your taxes; that measure was instigated by the nobles who to-day are organizing the demonstrations against me.' The speech fell flat, and its reception emboldened the Ghibellines to barricade the streets and call the people to arms. Summoned to disarm, because arming was an act of rebellion against the King, the leaders answered that they had armed in self-defence, and would disarm, when their enemies, the Guelfs, set the example. When one of them was threatened with arrest, the mob hurried to the rescue, compelling the French to draw off amid execrations and abuse. That night, the night of 1st–2nd February, Milan assumed the aspect of a besieged city, and in the morning Trivulzio, in alarm for his safety, withdrew to the castle. Next day, after a consultation with Ligny, who had come in from Como, Trivulzio marched away to the western frontier, there to await the reinforcements expected from France. As soon as he was gone, the houses of his partisans were looted, and the few Frenchmen remaining in the city were hunted down and maltreated or murdered. The Venetian agent, Zuam Dolce, concluded that he would do well to

think of his own safety, and began to destroy his papers in preparation for flight. He was still occupied in his task, when an armed band approached his lodgings with the object of looting them. Warned in time, Dolce escaped over a wall, hid in a monastery, and eventually made his way back to Venetian territory, travelling by night, and being twice robbed on the way.

Meanwhile the Sforza army was drawing near. A body of arblasters marched in on the 2nd, and was followed later in the day by Ascanio, who was accompanied by Hermes Sforza, Galeazzo di San Severino, and a body of 7,000 troops. Ludovic, who was then at Como, reached Desio on the 4th, slept in the country house of the murdered Landriano, and on the morning of the 5th approached Milan, where a solemn entry had been prepared. When he re-entered the city at the head of his troops, a delirious populace yelled itself hoarse, shouting, 'Moro, Moro! Duca, Duca!'. 'I verily believe', said one contemporary,[1] 'that, if the walls, the trees, and the earth had possessed voices, they, too, would have shouted, "Moro, Moro!".' The huge crowds were so clamorous in their welcome, said another,[2] that, if it had thundered, no one would have noticed it. After dismounting at the Cathedral, to return thanks for his restoration, the Duke rode on to the Corte Vecchia, and there came out into the courtyard, to address the assembled multitude. After an emphatic declaration of the affection he cherished for Milan, he went on to enlarge upon the good intentions by which he was animated. 'If in public or in private I have given cause of offence to any, I regret it deeply, and promise reparation. For my own part, I pardon all men—all except the Trivulzio family, whom I know to be a worthless race. Them have I cherished and favoured above all others; yet they have repaid me with the blackest ingratitude; and I hold them to have sinned, not against my own House alone, but against the whole Milanese. . . . The last of the family, and the worst, has brought about the ruin of the country. Them I must therefore punish, but it will be them alone. All others I pardon freely, and take them for my brothers and sons.' His inten-

[1] Cited by Pélissier, *Louis XII et Ludovic Sforza*, vol. ii, p. 130.

[2] Ambrogio da Paullo, 'Cronaca Milanese,' in *Miscellanea di Storia Italiana*, vol. xiii, p. 135.

tion, he continued, was to go in pursuit of the enemy. He would institute a commission to settle his debts, and the whole Governmental system as existing before his flight would be restored.[1]

The Duchy was lost to the French as quickly as it had been won. Except at Alessandria and Novara, which were held by strong garrisons, and at Piacenza and Lodi, which the Venetians secured by a rapid advance, the towns everywhere declared for Ludovic, driving out the French garrisons, which retreated in peril of their lives through the midst of an insurgent population. Even the large force which Trivulzio had led from Milan experienced difficulty in effecting its escape: the villages were astir in front; Lombard cavalry pursued; tree-trunks blocked the roads; the bridges were broken. Despite their danger, the French, true to their tradition of violence, inflicted as much damage as they could along their route by way of reprisals for the hostility of the population, sacking and burning the villages, and putting men, women, and children to the sword. Crossing the Ticino on 3rd February, and sleeping that night at Galliate, Trivulzio approached Novara on the 4th, to find that here, too, the town had declared for its former master, and had closed its gates. The citadel holding out for France, however, the town could not maintain its resistance, and on 5th February surrendered to Trivulzio, who entered with his forces.

Louis d'Ars, back from a daring raid on Bellinzona, had rejoined Trivulzio at Galliate. There was as yet no news of Yves d'Alègre, who had been ordered back from the siege of Pesaro. His force was not large; it was encumbered by many women and girls and an enormous booty seized in Romagna; it must traverse a wide extent of hostile territory; and as Galeazzo di San Severino had been sent with many German and Swiss troops to block its line of retreat, while the Marquis of Mantua was ordered to pursue, there was a confident expectation at Ludovic's head-quarters that the little army must be captured or destroyed. But more things

[1] Ambrogio da Paullo, 'Cronaca Milanese,' in *Miscellanea di Storia Italiana*, vol. xiii, pp. 130–6; Rosmini, *Dell' Istoria di Milano*, vol. iii, pp. 256–62; Pélissier, *Louis XII et Ludovic Sforza*, vol. ii, pp. 100–25; Ch. Kohler, 'Les Suisses dans les guerres d'Italie,' in *Mémoires de la Société d'Histoire de Genève*, Series II, vol. iv, pp. 4–7.

were possible to French horse and Swiss foot than were dreamt of in Italian strategy. Maintaining strict discipline, Yves d'Alègre passed Bologna, traversed the Parmesan, defeated a body of Lombard troops near Piacenza, inflicting heavy casualties, and on 9th February reached Tortona, which attempted resistance, and in a sack of exceptional brutality paid dearly for its temerity. Thence the force marched on Alessandria, where the Guelfs gave it admission, at Casale met a cavalry detachment under Ligny, and at Palestro joined hands with Trivulzio, who had advanced from Novara to meet it. Consisting as it did of 100 French lances and 3,500 Swiss, its arrival brought a welcome addition to the depleted ranks of the main French army.

Meanwhile the Duke of Milan had been using every endeavour to augment his forces and secure the superiority which would enable him to clear his dominions of the invaders. He reported his first successes to the Emperor, and begged that the help so often promised might now be sent; he demanded men from the Marquis of Mantua; he wrote to Switzerland for more soldiers. Burgundian and Swiss mercenaries were still coming in; Italian infantry were being enrolled; and the time was at hand when the Milanese army, though weak in *gens d'armes* and in guns, might count upon a numerical superiority over the forces at Trivulzio's disposal. The advantage, such as it was, would be short-lived, since Louis would undoubtedly take vigorous measures to regain the ground he had lost; and Ludovic's one chance of consolidating his position was to drive the enemy from the Milanese before reinforcements from France and Switzerland should reach the Duchy. Instead of attempting decisive action Ludovic frittered away his time in reducing scattered garrisons, in holding reviews of his troops, and in carrying out other undertakings of no military value. Leaving Ascanio to govern the capital and conduct the siege of the castle, which was firing upon the town and doing some damage, he went first to Pavia, where the citadel was held by a small body of French, who surrendered upon his approach. Then he moved against Vigevano, which Louis had bestowed upon Trivulzio, and here wasted a fortnight, as the small garrison offered an unexpected resistance. Nor was loss of time the most serious feature of this useless undertaking, for in the

course of it he was maladroit enough to arouse among his Swiss mercenaries a dissatisfaction fraught with disastrous consequences. After promising to let the Swiss sack the place, if they could capture it by assault, he negotiated with the townspeople, and guaranteed them against looting upon payment of a ransom of 15,000 florins. Partly to appease his irate mercenaries, and partly to effect a capture which would cut off the food supplies of Trivulzio's army at Mortara, he then marched to Novara, and on 3rd March began the siege of that city.

During these operations Trivulzio had remained inert, and apart from one reconnaissance in force, which had resulted in some fighting, nothing had been done to assist the gallant little band which had kept the French flag flying in Vigevano. This apathy infuriated the French nobles at Mortara, and Yves d'Alègre gave expression to the general feeling of the *gendarmerie*, when he denounced Trivulzio's inaction, and taxed him with leading the King's armies to defeat and bringing the King's power and prestige to ruin. In truth, however, the position of the commander-in-chief was more delicate than it seemed in the eyes of the insubordinate daredevils who criticized his leadership. He knew that great preparations were afoot beyond the Alps, and prudence required that he should risk no more disasters, until the arrival of reinforcements should restore his superiority. For the time being, as matters stood, his situation was far from pleasant, for the bridge over the Sesia had been destroyed by the inhabitants of Vercelli, the Novarese were known to favour the Sforza cause, and the main enemy forces were near at hand in sufficient strength to initiate offensive operations. There had been some talk of withdrawing all French forces behind the walls of Novara, and that course would probably have been adopted but for Ligny's opposition. To move into Novara, Ligny argued, would look like running away; it was essential that nothing should be done to discourage the Venetians or to dishearten French partisans in Milan; it was even more essential that the communications with Montferrat, whence the army was provisioned, should not be imperilled; and the proper course was to keep the main army in the field, whilst strengthening Novara against the likelihood of Milanese attack. This advice had prevailed,

and Yves d'Alègre had just entered Novara, when Ludovic appeared beneath the walls.

In moving against Novara Ludovic counted upon the effect which the prospect of pillage was likely to produce on the minds of a population already sympathetic to his cause. If a demonstration should fail to procure a surrender, he would not find it easy to procure it by an exertion of force. The guns necessary to that end were not in his possession, and the Swiss, with the deception practised on them at Vigevano fresh in mind, were in no mood to encounter the perils of an assault, unless assured of liberty to pillage in the event of success. With the twofold object of intimidating the townsfolk and animating his own troops Ludovic began by issuing a proclamation that the town would be sacked and burnt, unless it should surrender by the afternoon of 7th March. The proclamation was ignored, and on the fateful day reinforcements, escorted by a large French force, entered the city. Two days later there was heavy fighting, in the course of which Ludovic's Italian troops effected an entrance, but, being unsupported by the mercenaries, were thrown out again. On 20th March the German guns at last arrived, and a bombardment was begun which speedily destroyed a large stretch of wall. Next day Novara surrendered. By the terms of the capitulation the town was to pay 60,000 ducats; the French garrison were to march out under arms, either taking their guns with them, or leaving them in the citadel, which was not included in the capitulation; and all inhabitants who might wish to do so were to be at liberty to depart with the French. On the morning of the 22nd the French marched out, and at noon the Duke took possession of the city. Once again the Swiss were disappointed in their hopes of plunder.[1]

Six weeks and more had passed since Ludovic had re-entered Milan, and during those weeks the Government in France had not been idle. In the first access of his fury at the news of the Milanese rebellion Louis had put a price upon Ludovic's head, and had vowed that, if ever he should return in person to Italy, he would so deal with Milan that no trace of its existence should be left upon the face of the earth. He was at Loches, when the first bad news reached

[1] Pélissier, *Louis XII et Ludovic Sforza*, vol. ii, pp. 162–75.

him, and immediately he left for Lyons, that he might be near enough at hand to receive early tidings of the progress of events. Large bodies of *gendarmerie* were ordered to proceed to Italy; agents were sent to Switzerland, to enlist mercenaries; La Trémoille was selected for the supreme command; and the chief Minister of State, Georges d'Amboise, was also instructed to set out for Italy with a large administrative *personnel*, to direct the resettlement of Lombardy, when the expected victory should have been won. In Switzerland, where the annoyance with Louis had not died down, and where Ludovic's successes had put new heart into the partisans of Milan, the French request for help revived the contest between the supporters and the opponents of the French alliance. Envoys of the Valais once more put before the Diet the old contention that France would be a dangerous neighbour in the Duchy, and begged the Confederacy to intervene, to prevent its recovery by the King. An embassy from Maximilian supported their view, and reminded the Cantons that the Milanese belonged, not to Louis, but to the Empire. Louis meanwhile had sent to the Diet to protest against Ludovic's recruiting in the Valais and the Grisons, and to demand that no soldiers should be permitted to join the Duke and none forbidden to join the King. The attitude of the Diet was rather correct than friendly, Ludovic's recruiting being deplored, and assurances being given that everything was being done to protect French interests. The assurances may have been true, for the impotence of the Confederacy was revealed when the Bailli of Dijon reached the country and asked for volunteers. Despite official regulations thousands of mercenaries were enrolled in a few days, and when they began to march off across the St. Bernard, to join the French army in Italy, the press was so great that some had to be sent back. When these great reinforcements reached Italy, La Trémoille found himself at the head of 30,000 men. In making his forces ready for battle, he displayed the talent for patient organization which had first been revealed in the Breton campaign a decade before. Discipline was re-established; arms and armour were overhauled; remounts were reorganized; quarters were visited and inspected; frequent councils of war were held; and an efficient system of espionage was devised. The

organization became so perfect that, in the opinion of an observer, the army, even if confronted by the forces of Milan and of the Empire combined, would still be irresistible.[1]

Whilst the prospects of the French had thus been growing brighter, the fortunes of Ludovic had suffered a decline. The enthusiasm with which he had been welcomed back had proved ephemeral, and belief in his ultimate success had withered away. It was known that Venice remained true to the French alliance, it was suspected that Imperial promises would as usual be unfulfilled, and it was understood that the situation in Switzerland was changing for the worse. After its recent experiences Milan had no wish to endure more suffering, and to endure it in a losing cause. Yet misfortunes continued to crowd upon her in the licence of the Duke's undisciplined mercenaries, in scarcity of food, in repressive police measures, and in insatiable demands for money wherewith to pay the numerous troops serving under the Ducal banners. Reports from the city began to speak of growing distress and discontent. Food was short; the castle maintained a damaging fire; and money was scarce. The sacred vessels had been taken from the churches, and Ascanio was doing all he could to raise cash without meeting with much success. Towards the end of March a Milanese gentleman, a leader of the Ghibellines, made his way to Lodi, and told the Venetians that the extortions practised on his party had reached such a pitch that, in company with other gentlemen similarly situated, he had been obliged to flee from the persecution. The scarcity in Milan was great, and the people were anxious and discontented, the more so since Ludovic had imposed a multitude of taxes and was making incessant demands for money. Every day the grievous spectacle might be seen of numerous families going about the streets clad in mourning, candle in hand, and chanting piteously the sad refrain: 'Jesu Redemptor, miserere nobis.' The richest and most influential men were fleeing the country, and intelligent people felt sure that Ludovic's cause was lost.[2] From other sources it was learnt in Venice that scarcity and discontent were not confined to the capital, and that in Ludovic's army

[1] E. Gagliardi, *Der Anteil der Schweizer an den italienischen Kriegen*, pp. 371–5; Pélissier, *Louis XII et Ludovic Sforza*, vol. ii, p. 178.

[2] Sanuto, *I Diarii*, vol. iii, cols. 157–8, 160–1.

at Novara there were great confusion and disorder. Food and money were equally scarce; the Swiss and Germans intercepted such supplies as reached the camp, and were given the preference in the distribution of pay; the Italian troops were left hungry and destitute; and there was constant friction between the different sections of the army. No one in authority carried any weight, there was neither discipline nor obedience, 'but every man was his own master, lord, and captain.' Defections among the more important of the Duke's Italian adherents and desertions among the troops were events of daily occurrence. Seven hundred Swiss had marched away; two thousand more had got as far as Tortona, and had with some difficulty been prevailed upon to return. By a great effort Milan had raised 10,000 ducats, and had sent the money to Ludovic, who had received it despairingly, complaining that such an amount was of little avail to meet his necessities. It was told him that his capital had done its best, that it was not only discontented by incessant demands for money, but was also alarmed by the obvious danger of its position, and that an attempt to recruit men had failed.[1] If there were any truth in these reports, the issue of the impending struggle could not long remain in doubt.

After the capture of Novara Ludovic went to Milan, to see if he could achieve in person that which his representatives had failed to accomplish, and raise money for the pay of his troops. By the time that he rejoined the army, La Trémoille had effected a junction with Trivulzio, had completed his reorganization, and was ready to take the field. Leaving Mortara on Sunday, 5th April, La Trémoille slept that night at Vespolate, on the next morning selected a site for the camp, and, that done, went forward with some of his men to make a demonstration in front of the town, and to find out, as he himself expressed it, 'what sort of a face the enemy were putting upon it.'[2] Other troops had already been sent to Trecate, to cut off supplies from Novara. Some light horse, sent out from Novara to impede the French advance, came into contact with La Trémoille's advance guard on the

[1] *Ibid.*, cols. 190, 203.

[2] 'Quelle contenance ilz tenoient': letter from La Trémoille to Louis XII, *Chartrier de Thouars*, p. 32.

afternoon of the 6th, and throughout the whole of the 7th there were skirmishes before the city which led to some sharp fighting and tended to develop into a serious engagement.

At this juncture grave news arrived from Switzerland. Divided in opinion over its alliance with the French, and threatened with the prospect of an internecine struggle between its contingents in the rival armies, the Confederacy viewed with growing trouble the progress of events in Lombardy; and in the Lucerne Diet on 31st March it was decided to tell the Swiss on both sides that peace was being sought, and that in the meantime they must not take part in any combat. These orders were dispatched, and in due course reached the leaders of Ludovic's mercenaries. The copies sent to the French camp travelled by a longer route, and the French-Swiss leaders were still in ignorance that they had been issued, when Cardinal d'Amboise heard of them from his spies, and reported them to La Trémoille with the suggestion that he should hurry on a general engagement before their existence should become known. The suggestion was at once adopted, and early in the morning of the 8th the whole French army marched towards Novara with the intention of capturing the Convent of St. Nazaro in the suburbs, and, if the enemy should come out in its defence, of offering battle. The French, said La Trémoille, were full of zeal for the King's service and in as good fighting spirit as any troops he had ever seen, and, if the spirit of the enemy had matched theirs, there must have ensued as bloody a battle as had been witnessed for a century past. That issue was prevented by the refusal of Ludovic's mercenaries to disobey the orders of the Diet; and as a result of that refusal the Milanese forces which came out against the advancing French were driven back in wild confusion into the town.

The Duke's position was then precarious. He was shut up in Novara; his supplies were cut off; the fortifications were defective; the citadel was not in his possession; his best troops declined to obey his commands. He could not hope to hold the place for long; it was improbable that he could slip away unobserved; and he must fall into the hands of the enemy, unless he could fight his way out. Heroic measures were negatived by the attitude of his troops; the Swiss mercenaries were already fraternizing with their compatriots in

the enemy ranks; the Burgundians were seeking permission to retire unmolested; and the chief concern of each section of the force was to provide for its own escape without thought for the common safety or for the welfare of the Duke. Ludovic realized his danger, and during the night of the 8th–9th sent a Swiss officer to Ligny, with whom he was distantly connected, to ask for terms of surrender. Ligny, who seems to have been afraid lest Ludovic should yet contrive to elude capture, offered terms under which the Duke would retain his personal freedom at the cost of renouncing his claims to Milan. In taking this course he acted on his own responsibility and without consulting his colleagues, and La Trémoille, when the negotiations became known to him, refused to ratify the action of his subordinate. So far from thinking of any bargain with the Duke, La Trémoille at the time was treating with the Milanese Swiss for the surrender of the Duke's person, and although the mercenaries retained enough spirit to resent this insult to their honour, the French commander felt assured that by one means or another the prize must fall into his hands.

When Ludovic was told that the enemy were demanding his surrender, he went to the Swiss leaders, and, putting it to them that he had always paid them punctually and well, asked them why they should desert him and refuse to fight. They answered that they could not act in defiance of their own Government; their land was as dear to them as was his own to him; they could never return to it, if they should contravene the precise orders which they had received; in negotiating their contracts of service with him, they had more than once stipulated that they should not be required to act against the wishes of the Confederacy; and he had always declared that this was a thing which he would never desire of them. To this the Duke replied that he would not argue with them, but perhaps they would tell him how he could escape. They said at first that it was not their business to advise him, but afterwards suggested that he should either make a dash for Bellinzona or Domodossola, or don the dress of a peasant and slip away in disguise. Either plan would make demands on his physical strength to which he felt it to be unequal, and when on the same evening two French officers, sent by Ligny, came to offer new terms, he allowed

them to take their leave under the impression that their overture had been accepted. He had been offered an honourable establishment in France in return for a surrender to the King and the renunciation of his claim to Milan. In the desperation of the moment he had been tempted to close with this offer, lest worse should befall him, but he clung to his throne, and, his courage reviving with the prospect of losing it for ever, he reverted to the suggestion of the Swiss, and decided to make a last bid for freedom.

The possibility of some such attempt had not been overlooked by La Trémoille, who kept his army under arms all night, and drew so tight a cordon round Novara that no one could leave the town unobserved. As the dawn of the new day (10th April) came on, the advance guards were strengthened, and the *gendarmerie*, mounting their horses, took up their stations before the gates. Intelligence had been received from Novara that an attempt would be made to smuggle the Duke away, and orders were given that, if any body of enemy troops should try to break out, it should at once be attacked. Between five and six in the morning the Italian troops came out, supposing, through some misunderstanding, that the negotiations of the previous day had guaranteed them liberty to take their departure. They were instantly attacked, fled without attempting resistance, and were pursued for miles, suffering heavy loss. A fate still worse befell the Albanian light horse, who made for the Ticino, but found the crossing occupied by French cavalry under Yves d'Alègre, and were driven into the river or cut down on the bank. Meanwhile the Burgundians, who followed, had been ordered to lay down their arms, and then had been sent back into the town. There remained the Swiss and the German infantry, which had been drawn up outside the walls, and there had looked on at a butchery which they were powerless to arrest. In their ranks was Ludovic, who in his abortive attempt to escape had got as far as the suburbs, and then had taken refuge among the mercenaries, dressed as a Swiss soldier, with a pike in his hand, and his long hair concealed under his hat. Left defenceless by the rout of the cavalry, the infantry were at the mercy of the French, and must obey their commands. They were ordered to march away by different routes according to their

nationalities, the Germans towards Trent, the Burgundians towards Vercelli, and the Swiss towards Domodossola; but first they were required to defile two by two beneath the pikes of La Trémoille's Swiss, that each man might be scrutinized for the apprehension of the Duke. When seven or eight thousand had defiled without result, the Swiss leaders were threatened with a general massacre, if Ludovic were not given up. Their men did not want to betray him; but neither did they want to sacrifice their lives in an endeavour to shield him; and they told the leaders that he must be removed from the ranks. The French guns were already loaded, the men-at-arms had donned their helmets and couched their lances, the signal to assume battle formation had been given, and the attack would have begun, had not the French Swiss intervened on behalf of their compatriots, and told La Trémoille that, if he moved, they would attack him in rear. Before this menace the French attack had, therefore, to be called off, and the Bailli of Dijon, resuming negotiations with the Swiss leaders, extorted the promise that the Duke, if discovered in their ranks, should be handed over.

The search had now lasted for some three hours, during which time Ludovic had been moved from place to place, and had been recognized by many of the men. One who had seen him approached the Bailli, and asked what reward he would receive, if he were to point the Duke out. The Bailli offered a hundred crowns. The man demanded two hundred, and was at once promised that amount by the Bailli, who would have thought the capture cheaply bought, had he paid two thousand to effect it. The Bailli was then taken to the spot where Ludovic stood, with Galeazzo di San Severino beside him. He recognized the Duke, and moved as though to apprehend him, whereupon Ludovic demanded that he should be placed in the hands of Ligny, with whom he had concluded an agreement. A discussion ensued, and was still in progress, when Ligny joined the group, and bade Ludovic mount a horse, which La Palice offered him. Ludovic mounted, and was led away. He begged that he should not be taken before Trivulzio, since he could not bear to behold the man who was the author of all his woes. He was therefore conducted to La Trémoille, who received him

courteously, assuring him that he was doubly welcome, because his coming would save the King much expense and spare his generals much anxiety. He was then removed under a strong guard to the citadel of Novara.

'I think', wrote La Trémoille in his report to the King on these events, 'that, had it come to a battle, we should have given them a good drubbing, but the main thing was to catch the Moor. Our search lasted for three hours. We made them all pass under a pike, and at last our man was discovered. It is the best thing that has happened for a century, and redounds to your honour. He gave himself up to M. de Ligny, alleging an agreement come to with him over-night. M. de Ligny had told me something about this agreement during the morning, but the Moor forfeited his safe-conduct, if he ever got one, for he tried to run away. . . . Sire, methinks that you should lose no time in taking the Moor into your own hands and putting him into some good, strong place, from which he cannot escape. Sire, you promised me, when I left, that, as soon as your business here should be done, you would permit me straightway to come home. I beg that you will bear me in mind.'[1] In writing to his general to tell him of his pleasure in the victory, the King assured him that he had 'a marvellous longing to see the Moor on this side of the Alps. Let Hédouville and Louvain start with two hundred men-at-arms, and take him to Susa, where they will find M. de Crussol, Captain of the Guard, with his archers, who will bring him in safety to me. I shall never be happy till I get him across the Alps'.[2]

However deep the King's satisfaction, it was a poor emotion by comparison with the feelings of delight and gratitude with which the news of La Trémoille's victory was welcomed in the home where he was idolized, and where loving hearts had trembled for his safety and prayed fervently for his success. 'Monseigneur mon amy', wrote his wife, Gabrielle de Bourbon, 'I know not how I shall ever thank God and His Blessed Mother enough for the fine and honourable victory which has been vouchsafed to you. . . . You must be the happiest gentleman in France, and I am the happiest of

[1] Jean d'Auton, *Chroniques*, ed. R. de Maulde, vol. i, pp. 357–8; *Chartrier de Thouars*, pp. 32–3.

[2] *Chartrier de Thouars*, pp. 40–1.

women in the prospect of seeing you again before long. . . . Our folk are all well, thank God, and your son is more captivating than ever. As for me, I am one who loves you much, and is your very humble and most obedient "mignonne".'[1] No less charming was the tone of playful affection in which his sister, Antoinette, Countess of Tonnerre, wrote to tell him the news from his home, and to assure him of her delight in the capture of 'this scoundrelly Moor'. 'Your wife, thank God, is in splendid health, and her joy over the favour God has granted you is indescribable. Such has been the giving of thanks to God Almighty and all the saints of Paradise that never before, I promise you, has there been such a praying; and I verily believe that it is to these prayers of hers that you owe your victory. I assure you, Sir, that, unless some change should come over her, you will find her looking younger and prettier than ever; and God grant that this meeting may be soon. I told you, when I wrote before, that your son was a perfect paragon, but now, upon my word, I am bound to retract, for ever since he heard of your victory he has been so naughty that it has been impossible to do anything with him. He is a true son of yours, as lively as you used to be yourself, and, if you do not soon find him a bride, methinks he will go and find one for himself. Naughty boy though he be, however, he is, thank God, fit and well and strong, and he is the most delightful companion in the world. May God bring you safe home again, Monseigneur, to gladden the hearts of those who have missed you so much.'[2]

On 17th April, a week after his capture, Ludovic was taken from the citadel of Novara, to begin the long journey which would end in a French prison. Ligny escorted him to Susa, where he was to be put in charge of M. de Crussol's archers. He was treated with respect and consideration, rich dress being given him, and every provision made for his comfort. His health was so bad that he soon became incapable of continuing the journey on horseback, and even when carried in a litter, he could do no more than travel by easy stages. At

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 43.

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 235–6. The 'naughty boy' was Charles de la Trémoille, Prince of Talmond, who was born in 1487, and married Louise de Coëtivy in 1501. He fell at Marignano, and his wife went mad on learning the news.

Asti, where the sentiment of the population was Orleanist, he was received with a hostility which affected him painfully. On 26th April he set foot for the first time on French soil, reached Grenoble on the 29th, and on 2nd May was led in triumph into Lyons, where great crowds, which had assembled for the fair, thronged to witness the unusual spectacle, and to make such reflections as it might suggest upon the mutability of human fortunes. The King looked on from one window; the representatives of Spain and Venice were at another; and on the morrow the envoy of the Signory related his impressions. 'Signor Ludovic was brought into this city yesterday. He was preceded by twelve local officials, who kept back the people, of whom there were great crowds in all the streets. Then came the Governor of the city and the King's Provost of Justice on horseback, followed by a hundred archers of the Royal Bodyguard; and after these came Signor Ludovic, clad in black and with a black hat, which he carried almost continuously in his hand. He looked about in every direction, trying to conceal the mortification which he felt in so complete a change of fortune. Though newly shaved, he had the air of a sick man, and he trembled in every limb. Close beside him was the Captain of the Royal Archers, and behind him came a hundred archers more. In this fashion he was led through the middle of the town to the castle, where he is being closely guarded, until the iron cage, in which he is to be lodged at night, is completed. The cage will be very strong, the iron being encased in wood, and the whole being so fashioned that it will be impossible to tamper with it. I must not omit to mention that, as Ludovic passed, the Spanish ambassador and I stood at a window to watch, and, upon having the Spanish ambassador pointed out to him, Ludovic took off his hat. When told that the Venetian ambassador was there as well, he stopped and made as if to speak. I took no notice, and the Captain of the archers hurried him on. Discussing the matter with the King afterwards, I told him that I should have felt shame rather than honour in receiving any mark of good will from such a person. The King tells me that he has given up the idea of sending him to Loches, because he himself sometimes goes there to hunt, and does not wish ever to see him or to be in the same place with him. He will send him

to a place in Berry, near Bourges, where there is a very strong castle with a live moat larger than that round the castle at Milan. The place is in the very centre of France, and there will be a strong guard, composed of persons devoted to His Majesty and commanded by the man who was captain of his archers, when he was Duke of Orleans. When Ludovic dismounted from his mule, he had to be lifted bodily and carried into the castle, being incapable, so it is said, of walking a step without help. Every one feels sure that his days are numbered.'[1]

The general expectation was not fulfilled: Ludovic lived on through eight weary years of captivity, of which four were passed at Lys-Saint-Georges in Berry and the remainder at Loches. His treatment was upon the whole not unkind. His Italian servants were at first taken from him, but upon a representation of the inconvenience thereby caused were permitted to return. At Lys-Saint-Georges he spent his time not unpleasantly in field sports, fishing, and card-playing; 'and, because he takes pleasure in hearing the news, the King from time to time has conveyed to him as much as he thinks convenient.'[2] His chief sorrow lay in the obdurate refusal of the King to grant him an interview, for he believed that, could he but speak with him, he could play upon his good nature skilfully enough to get put back in Milan as his vassal. To such an interview the King would never consent, but, as time went on, he lost his fear of his dangerous captive, and at Loches Ludovic enjoyed a considerable measure of freedom, until he abused his privileges by an attempt at evasion. He was then closely immured in a dark, vault-like room, and, books and writing material being denied him, he occupied his leisure in covering his prison walls with mottoes and designs. 'Je porte en prison pour ma devise que je m'arme de patience par force de peines que l'on me fait porter.' It was a sad and lonely end for the man who had occupied the richest throne in Italy and presided with distinction over Europe's most brilliant Court.

With the tragedy at Novara the House of Sforza suffered a complete eclipse. Not only was the Duke taken, but his

[1] Sanuto, *I Diarii*, vol. iii, cols. 320–2. The place in Berry was Lys-Saint-Georges, two leagues from Bourges.

[2] *Ibid.*, vol. iii, col. 1619.

chief adherents were captured with him, and his brother Ascanio, fleeing from Milan, was seized by the Venetians near Piacenza, and upon Louis' insistent demand was likewise transferred to the security of a French dungeon. The person of Gian Galeazzo's youthful heir was already in French hands, for he had been taken from his mother's side, when the King had visited Milan in the autumn of the previous year, and had been carried back to France in the Royal suite. There remained only the two young sons whom Ludovic had left behind in Germany, when he had begun his second campaign. Years must pass before anything need be apprehended from these unfortunate infants, who were so helpless that they could not even prevent the poor remnant of their father's treasure from being appropriated by their host and *soi-disant* protector, the Emperor.

With the Duke safely under lock and key, his captors turned to the task of pacification and reconstruction in their reconquered possession. Henceforth they would have things their own way, for the spirit of the Ghibellines was broken, and the main concern of the population was to avert reprisals by abject submission. As soon as it heard of the disaster at Novara, the capital hoisted French flags, and sent an embassy to swear allegiance. On 14th April the Cardinal of Rouen arrived with 2,000 men, and took up his abode in the castle. Three days later, when Trivulzio had also come, the city made a formal act of contrition and proffered a solemn appeal for forgiveness. The citizens kneeled bareheaded in the streets, and the children, who had lately been taught to yell, 'Moro! Duca!', passed in pitiful procession, with crucifixes and palm branches, crying, 'France, France! Mercy, mercy!' The people of Milan, said their spokesmen, were like St. Peter, consumed by remorse, because they had forsaken their master: to which the Cardinal replied that he hoped that the resemblance might be only partial, seeing that the Saint had denied his Master, not once, but thrice. Continuing in a more serious vein, he was able to promise immunity from looting by the army and a general amnesty for all except the leaders of the recent revolt upon condition that the city paid an indemnity of 800,000 ducats, a sum afterwards reduced to 300,000 ducats payable by instalments, of which in fact a moiety was never paid.

For the self-restraint of the Cardinal in the exaction of indemnities the French found compensation in their treatment of the Sforza adherents, who had been excepted from the amnesty. Some of the most important had been captured at Novara, and had been removed with Ludovic to France. Others, who had fled, had fallen into the hands of the Venetians, or had taken refuge on the soil of Ferrara or Mantua; but all were soon in the hands of the French, who insisted that they should be given up. A few had escaped to Innsbruck, and there busied themselves in vain endeavours to arouse Maximilian to a belated activity. Captive or free, all had left property at the mercy of the conquerors, who had expressly excepted it from the general amnesty, and took care that it should not be spared. Nor was it only the avowed partisans of the Sforza régime who suffered. The scorn with which the French had at first regarded a people who had not dared to resist hardened after Ludovic's return into a bitter hatred for a people who had dared to rebel. In Milan the houses of the prominent Ghibelline families were sacked, and the French quartered themselves at their own sweet will upon the citizens, refusing to pay for their food, and helping themselves to anything they fancied. The women fled to the convents, but often without finding safety in places where even the nuns themselves were not respected. The most illustrious ladies in Milan suffered insult and dishonour, for there could be small hope of escaping from the licence of a brutal soldiery, when its leaders amused themselves by stripping the clothes from the women they met in the streets and carrying them about naked on their horses. Well might one onlooker grieve over 'the shame of our poor Italy', and another declare that the sufferings of Milan were fit to wring tears from a stone.

This wanton licence sorely vexed the Cardinal of Rouen, who knew that his master's interest called for a tactful and conciliatory policy in the territory which henceforth he was to rule; but all the authority of the King's representative was powerless to restrain the troops or to counteract the influence and example of Trivulzio, by whom that authority was in a measure shared. The arrogant and vengeful *condottiere* had been a thorn in the side of his employers from the moment of their first coming to Milan. At one and the

same time he had paraded the authority which he derived from the French and had affected independence of their control. On his own responsibility and without reference to his expert advisers he had settled political and military questions, imposed taxes, and pronounced judgement in cases before the Courts. The inefficiency of his administration, the incapacity of the agents whom he chose among his relatives and friends, his ingratitude to his supporters, his cruelty to his enemies, his insolence to members of an old and proud nobility, and his indifference to popular sentiment had gone far towards producing the revulsion of feeling which had enabled Ludovic to return. So long as Ludovic had been at large, the French had thought that it was safer to keep Trivulzio in their service than to dismiss him. But when the Duke was taken, and the Duchy had submitted without thought of further resistance, the position became different, and the numerous enemies of the unpopular Governor saw that their chance had come. Ligny went off to France, to use his influence with the King. He was supported by Cardinal d'Amboise, who coveted Trivulzio's office for his nephew, Chaumont, and urged the wisdom of appointing a French Governor, who, as a stranger to Milanese politics, would hold the balance impartially between Milanese factions. Trivulzio was accordingly recalled to France and dismissed from his office in Italy, which was conferred upon Chaumont d'Amboise.[1]

Cowed by its misfortunes and exhausted by its sufferings, the Milanese made the best of its fate, and settled down more or less contentedly under French rule. It had still to bewail the conduct of the army of occupation, but with the cessation of hostilities the number of its tormentors was reduced to tolerable proportions. In other respects, it began, after a brief period of famine and plague, to reap the benefits of stable and equitable government. 'Commerce, industry, agriculture, internal navigation, all the elements of national prosperity started afresh with renewed vigour; general security gave free scope to individual initiative; in its prosperity the people forgot the loss of its independence, and the maintenance of municipal liberty obscured the death of free-

[1] Pélissier, *Louis XII et Ludovic Sforza*, vol. ii, pp. 313–25; Rosmini, *Istoria di Milano*, vol. iii, pp. 286–90.

dom. The control by France of the government, the administration, and the social life of Milan completed the work begun by the conquest of the Duchy, the defeat of the Duke, and the elimination of the Sforza family. In less than a year Louis XII became all-powerful in Lombardy.'[1]

The political effects of the conquest were more durable than the transient results of Charles VIII's ephemeral successes. At the accession of Louis XII the influence of France in Italy did not extend beyond a somewhat precarious authority over the sub-Alpine States: by the summer of 1502 she had acquired an undisputed hegemony in the north, and a preponderating influence in the centre, of the peninsula. She had come into Italy as the ally of its two chief powers, Venice and the Pope; and after her establishment in the Milanese she saw to it that the lesser States should realize the existence of a new factor in Italian politics. Such as had held aloof from the contest must seek to justify their neutrality. Such as had sided with the loser must purchase absolution for their offence. Amongst the latter were found the Duke of Ferrara, who had paid allegiance to Louis XII after his first successes, but had afterwards resumed his former relations with Ludovic; the Marquis of Mantua, who had tried without success to keep in with both sides, and must pay for his failure by banishing his brother, delivering up all Milanese refugees who had sought his protection, and disbursing 50,000 ducats; the Bentivogli of Bologna, who had supplied Ludovic with men, and must pay 40,000 ducats to be taken into the King's protection; the Regent of Montferrat, who despite the alliance of his State with France had surreptitiously favoured Louis' enemy, and must give up his Regency; Siena and Lucca, which had compromised themselves with Ludovic, and must pay for their temerity with pecuniary indemnities and the surrender of Montepulciano by the one and of Pietrasanta by the other; and Caterina Sforza, against whom Cesare Borgia was let loose, with French troops to help him. It was plain that the politics of Italy were to be modified profoundly by the establishment of the French in the peninsula.

A change patent to all the world was apprehended with painful distinctness in the State which had been mainly

[1] Pélissier, *Louis XII et Ludovic Sforza*, vol. ii, p. 341.

instrumental in bringing it about. Venice did not, indeed, have cause to complain of any lack of faith in her ally, who fulfilled exactly the bargain by which it had purchased her support. Despite much opposition in France and in Italy she was confirmed in the possession of the Ghiara d'Adda, whilst Louis also honoured his bond in the matter of aid against the Turks. But, though the bond was honoured, the Signory were made aware that it was to be the bond and nothing but the bond: the help given against the Turk was sent tardily and without alacrity; the possession of Lecco and of the other bank of the Adda was peremptorily refused; and Venetian aspirations in the Valtelline were not gratified. Small regard was paid to the honour of Venice in the demand that Ascanio Sforza and other Milanese prisoners should be delivered up, and her interest was ignored in the liberty accorded to Cesare Borgia to establish himself in her sphere of influence in Romagna. Her possessions in Naples were also threatened by the avowed intention of the French to revive Charles VIII's Angevin claims. She had brought the French into Italy in the belief that, when the two protagonists had exhausted themselves in a protracted struggle, she would remain the arbiter of the situation. The struggle had resolved itself into a trifling skirmish; a triumph cheaply gained had made the victors more formidable than before; and Venice found that she had deprived herself by her own act of the hegemony of Italy.

The operations of Cesare Borgia in Romagna were the direct outcome of the Milanese expedition, for a promise to aid in establishing him in that province had been the bait with which the Pope had been lured into the net of Franco-Venetian policy, and it was in pursuance of that undertaking that the effectives of Cesare's army had been made up of troops placed at his disposal by Louis XII in the autumn of 1499. Entering Romagna by way of the Ferrarese, Cesare had proceeded first against Imola and Forlì, the possessions of Caterina Sforza. That dauntless lady had prepared for a vigorous resistance, and, to stiffen the backs of her people, had told them what they might expect in the event of that resistance being unsuccessful: the army of the attacker, she said, was a medley of brutal barbarians, who knew no law, and stopped at no cruelty; and to open the gates to them

was to court a bitter servitude, as had been shown in the days of Charles VIII's invasion, and was being demonstrated again in Lombardy. Despite this warning, Imola, when summoned to surrender, tamely agreed to do so, though a brave officer held out in the citadel, and calmly replied to a threat of massacre that a good soldier and a good Christian was always prepared to die. By 11th December, however, he had been forced by the vigour of the attack to capitulate on honourable terms; a week later Cesare had entered the town of Forlì; and on 12th January he had captured the citadel together with the lion-hearted lady who had been the soul of its defence. He had then begun to prepare for an attack on another Sforza possession at Pesaro, when Ludovic's return from Germany had necessitated the immediate withdrawal of his French and Swiss troops. Machiavelli at the time and other critics since have condemned the shortsightedness of Louis XII in adopting a policy of which Cesare's successes in Romagna were the firstfruits, and a dangerous extension of the temporal power might well be the final harvest. There is much force in the criticism, but in defence of the King it may be argued that Romagna was the object of many desires, and that, if he had not given Cesare a free hand there, Louis must either himself have occupied the province, or have witnessed its absorption by the Venetians, who had lost no opportunity of pushing their interests in its turbulent cities. In the judgement of some observers, the King showed a commendable astuteness in encouraging the Pope in an ambition calculated to overreach itself; and Borgia designs drew from Trivulzio the remark that 'he who chases all the hares, ends by catching none'.[1]

There was another quarter of Italy which felt the repercussion of events in Milan, and that was Tuscany, where Florence pursued with feeble fatuousness her vendetta against the Pisans. The city of the Medicis, once so rich, influential, and distinguished, had fallen from its high estate: by its refusal to join the League of Venice it had alienated the sympathies of Italy without exciting any real gratitude in the minds of the French; internal dissensions were sapping its vigour; and its economic prosperity was being under-

[1] Alvisi, *Cesare Borgia, Duca di Romagna*, pp. 58–69; Pasolini, *Caterina Sforza*, vol. ii, p. 132.

mined by the interminable Pisan war. Florence had been placed in a position of great difficulty by the French attack upon Milan, and the policy of neutrality, by which she had attempted to extricate herself, had served merely to impair still further her political importance. However unwise, the policy was natural in the circumstances. She had long been on intimate terms with France, and the sympathies of her people were definitely Francophil; but she was also very friendly with Ludovic, who had supported her against Pisa, whereas Venice, the ally of France, had abetted her rebels. Anxious that both these friendships should be preserved, she had tried to prevent the alliance between Louis and the Signory and to stay the attack upon Milan. Not only had she failed to attain these objects, but her pursuit of them had greatly damaged her with the French, who had looked to her for whole-hearted co-operation. If Louis was to revive the Angevin claim to Naples, however, he could not afford to quarrel with the Florentines, or refuse to receive the embassy which they sent to him in September 1499, to congratulate him upon the conquest of Milan and to protest their devotion to himself. The embassy was charged to explain that the relations of the Republic with Ludovic were attributable wholly to the extreme importance of the Pisan question, to declare that Florence would welcome a close alliance with the King, and to seek to convince him that in helping her he would at the same time further his own interests in Italy. With some help from d'Amboise, who was favourable to the Republic, a convention was at length negotiated, and was published in October 1499.

By the terms of this convention Florence proclaimed that she was the friend of the King of France and his allies and the enemy of his enemies, and as such she was taken into the protection of the King, who undertook to give her military aid, promised that he would not assist her rebels, and confirmed all privileges granted by his predecessors. Florence undertook to hold at the King's disposal 400 men-at-arms and 3,000 foot for the defence of Milan or any other part of his Italian possessions, and promised that, when he should undertake the conquest of Naples, she would give him the help of 500 men-at-arms and provide 50,000 *écus* for the hire of Swiss. In return for this support the King promised that

he would help her to effect the recovery of Pisa, which had been promised by Charles VIII, undertaking to reduce it, when on his way to Naples, or, if he should not go to Naples, then to send an army specially for the purpose, for the pay of which Florence might make use of the sum of 50,000 *écus* that she had contracted to provide.[1]

After the final reduction of Milan it was agreed at the instance of Florence that the help against Pisa should be given at once, and a force of Swiss and Gascons with guns and wagons was detailed for the purpose. It was the intention of the King to place this force under the command of Yves d'Alègre, but the Florentines requested the appointment of M. de Beaumont; they remembered that as Governor of Leghorn in Charles VIII's time he almost alone among French captains had honoured the pledge which required that his post should be restored to the Republic, and, as Guicciardini remarked, they did not pause to reflect that, admirable as good-faith may be, experience of war is also essential in the commander of an army. Under the direction of the competent soldier who had proved his mettle in the remarkable retreat from Romagna the expedition against Pisa might have ended in success. In the hands of the well-intentioned but inexperienced leader selected at the instance of the Republic it was foredoomed to failure. The Swiss and Gascons set out from Piacenza on 22nd June 1500, taking with them six cannon and twenty-two small guns. Their conduct was disorderly from the start; they pillaged some places, and seized others, which they refused to give up. They reached Pisa on 29th June, and had not been there long, when scarcity of food and of wine provoked in them a temper little short of mutinous. Beaumont was unable to control them, and received no support from his officers, who sympathized with the Pisans, and paid no heed to his authority. He had been but a few days at Pisa, when the enemy intercepted dispatches to the King and the Cardinal couched in a strain which showed clearly that he had lost all hopes of success: Pisa, he said, was heavily fortified and strongly held; his army was short of munitions and supplies, for the Floren-

[1] Canestrini et Desjardins, *Négociations diplomatiques de la France avec la Toscane*, vol. ii, pp. 26–7, note; Molini, *Documenti di Storia Italiana*, vol. i, pp. 32–3.

tines had played them false, leaving them dependent upon the people of Lucca; and, so far as he could see, the undertaking must end in failure.[1]

The despondent anticipation was quickly realized. After one impetuous attack, which was frustrated by the skill and vigour of the defence, the beseigers lost heart, and began to retire. On 7th July the Gascons deserted in a body, and next day the Swiss threatened to murder the Florentine commissary, unless their pay was instantly handed over. 'The French', wrote an exultant Pisan, 'arrived and encamped on 29th June. They had thirty pieces of artillery, and next morning began to bombard the city on the Santa Croce side. In the course of the day they made a breach, because the wall there was very weak by reason of a walled-up gate. This done, they put themselves in battle order, but were severely repulsed, notwithstanding that we were unprepared for battle, not having expected the wall to fall so soon. After the battle we repaired the fortifications quickly and well, and eagerly awaited another trial of strength with the French, upon whom we hoped to inflict a punishment yet more severe. On 3rd July they moved their guns, bombarded all day, and made another breach; but this did us no harm, as we were ready to effect repairs. After that they spent some days without a notion what to do next, and in the meantime our guns, big and little, played on them so effectually that they were safe only in their trenches or under ground. Their losses amounted to 500 men, and as many more have been accounted for by our light horse in the outlying districts, so that corpses abound everywhere. In Pisa alone there are two hundred horses belonging to men who have been captured, and as for the money and property of prisoners I will content myself with saying that there is so much that even the peasants are enabled to have a good time. On 11th July the enemy broke up their camp ignominiously, and took up their quarters at Cascina. We owe our success in some measure to a captain called Tarlatino di Castello, who joined us just about the time when the French arrived; he is a man of the greatest courage, knowledge, and skill, and is born for big operations.'[2]

[1] Portoveneri, *Memoriale*, in *Archivio Storico Italiano*, Series I, vol. vi, part ii, p. 353. [2] Sanuto, *I Diarii*, vol. iii, cols. 533–5.

Highly incensed by the ignominious outcome of Beaumont's intervention in Tuscany, the King of France swore that the Florentines should be made to pay for the disgrace which had befallen his arms. To regain his good-will by convincing him that the calamity had been caused, not by the apathy or treachery of the Republic, but by the incompetence of his general and the indiscipline of his troops, della Casa and Machiavelli were sent off post-haste on a mission to the French Court. Their task was neither easy nor pleasant. The French, they reported, had got their heads turned by their own power, and esteemed only those who were powerful or opulent. They saw that Florence could not lay claim to those two qualities, and ascribed the bad behaviour of their own army to her bad organization. In the absence of properly accredited ambassadors—for the former ambassadors had left, and there was no news of any new ones coming—and in view of the nature of their errand, the envoys found that their status did not suffice to refloat a sinking ship. The King was greatly put out, complained incessantly that he had to pay to the Swiss a sum of 38,000 francs, which under the terms of the convention of Milan ought to have been provided by Florence, and vowed that he would make an independent State of Pisa and the surrounding territory. Florence must try by the use of bribes to get some friends in France, who would be moved by something stronger than natural affection. This had to be done by all with business at the French Court, and he who should neglect to do it would be like a man who should try to win a lawsuit without feeing his attorney.[1] The quarrel was patched up, because neither side could afford to estrange the other; but for a long time the memory of the Pisan fiasco continued to rankle, clouding the once happy relations between France and her best Italian friend.

A matter of more moment for France was the progressive deterioration of her relations with the Swiss, which entered upon a new phase with the conquest of Milan.[2] After that

[1] Letters of 27th August, 29th August, and 14th September, cited by Villari, *The Life and Times of Niccolò Machiavelli*: and see Machiavelli, *Opere*, vol. iii, pp. 160–3, 179–80.

[2] For this section of my work I am indebted to E. Gagliardi, *Der Anteil der Schweizer an den italienischen Kriegen*, vol. i, pp. 442–4, 494–569; Ch.

event those relations turned upon the satisfaction of the mercenaries, to whom Louis owed his triumph, and upon the possession of certain frontier places, which he had promised as the reward of victory. After the capture of the Duke of Milan and the final submission of the Duchy it became unnecessary for the King to maintain a large army in the Milanese, and his first thought was to get rid of his mercenaries, who were a source of much expense, and after the manner of their kind were but too likely to become a source of trouble. Like other employers of the mountain warriors, however, he found that it was a simpler matter to enroll mercenaries than to disband them, for the troops whom he wished to dismiss declined to go, until he should have satisfied the demands which they had put forward. To those demands he was not inclined in the first flush of his success to pay heed. Though they had been on active service for no more than four weeks, the Swiss demanded two months' pay, a gratuity of a third months' pay as a reward for the capture of Ludovic, and the provision of sumpter animals for the carriage of their booty over the mountains; and they declared that, if Louis did not comply, they would seize some of his best towns and pay themselves. One contingent halted at Ivrea, and refused to go farther, until the second month's pay should have been disbursed. Another broke into open revolt at Saronno, held a mass meeting from which its officers were excluded, and detained the person of the Bailli of Dijon as security; and it was with great difficulty that the men were at length prevailed upon to set the Bailli at liberty and await the decision of the King.

Within a fortnight the trouble broke out again in a more acute form. The mercenaries were then at Vercelli, where the French had arranged to pay them off. They adhered to their previous pretensions, insisting upon the provision of sumpter animals and a reward for capturing Ludovic, and their temper was made the uglier by the outbreak of a dispute about questions of precedence in the distribution of pay. The Bailli, who knew his men, and had experienced

Kohler, 'La conquête du Tessin par les Suisses' (*Revue historique*, vol. XLV) and 'Les Suisses dans les guerres d'Italie' (in *Mémoires de la Société d'histoire de Genève*, Series II, vol. iv); and E. Rott, *Histoire de la représentation diplomatique de la France auprès des Cantons suisses*, vol. i.

a recent taste of their methods, sent off hurriedly for further supplies of cash. Less experienced, and therefore more venturesome, a civilian commissary called Doucet declared roundly that the mercenaries were not entitled to any gratuity, and that he would not provide funds for its payment. The smouldering embers of revolt were fanned into flame once again by this rash announcement. A hundred mutineers, led by two Grisons officers, made for the office of the commissary with the avowed object of putting him to death. A Swiss officer and his men, waiting on the stairs to receive their pay, refused at first to let them pass, but were compelled to give way, when news of the disturbance got abroad, and the ranks of the mutineers were joined by hundreds of their dissatisfied comrades. An organized attempt was then made to break into the room, in which the terrified Doucet had locked himself, with the Bailli of Dijon and the Captain of the Swiss Guard as the companions of his peril. Vainly the Royal officers tried to barricade the door, and as vainly sought an avenue of escape. In a few moments the door gave way beneath the blows that rained upon it, and the angry mob rushed into the room. Before them stood the Bailli, with the Captain of the Guard at his side, and behind these the obnoxious Doucet, who, clutching at a straw, had hurriedly disguised himself in the dress of a Swiss soldier. With their compatriot, the Captain of the Guard, the Swiss had no quarrel, and they did not recognize in the soldier the presumptuous commissary who had provoked the riot, and was the special object of their search. They therefore turned upon the unhappy Bailli, who fell to the ground beneath a shower of blows, kicks, and curses, and was half dead, with most of the hair torn from his head, when at last he escaped from their clutches.

The trouble with the mercenaries resulted from the clash of French pride with Swiss greed, and an end might have been put to it at any moment by the disbursement of a few thousand *écus*. A problem of far greater difficulty and importance had meanwhile arisen in the claim of the Forest Cantons to the possession of a part of the Duchy of Milan. On the first conquest of the Duchy in 1499 the town of Bellinzona had been occupied by French troops, whom it had driven out again, when Ludovic came back in January

1500; and after the French had effected their second conquest, it must expect to pay the penalty for its act of defiance. When, therefore, in the following March a Swiss contingent entered the place on its way to join La Trémoille in Italy, Bellinzona begged that it would accept its submission in the name of the Canton of Uri. The Swiss consented, suspended their march, and remained in occupation, and in April the representatives of Uri, Schwyz, and Unterwalden formally took the town under their protection, with delivery of the keys and acts of homage and allegiance. The Cantons claimed that they were merely carrying out the bargain by which Louis in 1495 and again in 1499 had guaranteed the cession of Bellinzona, Locarno, and Lugano in return for the help of the Swiss against Ludovic, and applied formally that their occupation might be recognized by the new owner of the Milanese. This application was curtly refused by Louis, who said that the cession would be inconsistent with his duty to his new subjects, threatened to withdraw the commercial privileges of the Swiss in the Milanese, if Bellinzona were not promptly evacuated, and wrote to the Diet to express his astonishment at the usurpation and his hope that the Confederacy would have the matter put to rights.

The Diet had received with mixed feelings the news of the action of Uri, Schwyz, and Unterwalden. The action was unwelcome to the Cantons of the west, which valued the alliance with France, and were opposed to a policy of expansion fraught with possibilities of conflict. Other members of the Confederacy believed that an attempt to hold the places in dispute would cause more trouble than the places were worth. It was agreed that the Forest Cantons should be invited to consent to a restitution in return for a money payment by Louis and the restoration of all the commercial privileges which the Swiss had enjoyed in Milan under the Sforza régime. Unterwalden accepted the suggestion; Uri and Schwyz stood firm; nor could they be induced to shift their ground, though an embassy from the Confederacy formally demanded that Bellinzona should be given up. On the contrary, they complained that the French had stopped payment of the pensions due to them, were trying to cut off their supplies and ruin their trade, and had subjected their people to robbery and ill-usage; and they called for the help

of the Confederacy in the assertion of their rights and the redress of their wrongs. Since the angry mercenaries had then come home, and were also clamouring for an attack upon the Milanese, the Bellinzona question seemed likely to become the occasion of a serious quarrel.

The Diet would have been glad to restrain the mercenaries, as it had previously tried to restrain the Forest Cantons, and efforts were made to obtain from Louis XII a settlement of the soldiers' claims; but in August 1501 the impatient soldiers would wait no longer, and, appealing to the Forest Cantons to join in with them, crossed the border into Lombardy, attacked Lugano, and began to ravage the surrounding country. Upon hearing the news, the Cardinal of Rouen raised 4,000 infantry and collected *gens d'armes* from the nearest garrisons, whilst other men-at-arms and a body of archers were hurried over the Alps from Lyons. On 26th August these reinforcements reached the advanced post in which a small French force had maintained itself for over a week against repeated Swiss attack. The Swiss at Lugano were then in the difficulty that they could not advance without a battle and in the event of a reverse might lose their plunder. On 12th September they left Lugano before dawn, and retreated to Bellinzona, protesting that they were all good Frenchmen, who had no wish to fight against the King, but merely wanted to collect their pay. A council of war was held in the French camp, to consider these overtures: some of the leaders thought that it would be prudent to end a tiresome affair by pecuniary concessions, but others argued that the object of the enemy was to escape with their booty, and, if that were permitted, they would boast that they had plundered Lombardy under the eyes of a French army and marched away in safety, which would damage French prestige and invite further raids. It was therefore decided to attack the enemy, and on 13th September there was an engagement, in which the Swiss suffered rather heavily, though in the end they succeeded in getting through with their booty to Bellinzona.

Involved in Naples, and dependent upon Swiss troops for the pursuit of his projects in that region, Louis XII had neither the means nor the wish to undertake a war in Lombardy, and when the envoys of the Confederacy waited upon

the Cardinal of Rouen in September, they found in him a much more accommodating temper than he had displayed in earlier negotiations. He received them with marked courtesy, and told them that he would do his best to induce his master to satisfy their demands. On 14th September a provisional settlement was agreed to: Louis was to send the money claimed by the troops; the Swiss were to send an embassy to Louis, to put their case before him; full commercial facilities were to be restored to the people of Bellinzona for a period of two years, without prejudice to the question of the ownership of the place; and no aid was to be given to the Milanese exiles.

This agreement, which was in the nature of a truce, and did not purport to settle the Bellinzona dispute, failed to gain acceptance with the men of Uri, at whose instigation the Diet sent to France in August 1502, to formulate new demands. Louis was gracious, but in the matter of Bellinzona remained inflexible, and his relations with the Confederacy once more became strained. The Diet was still pacific, however, and implored the men of Uri to refrain from hostilities; but the request fell upon the deaf ears of an angry Canton. Uri replied that its people suffered insults and injuries at the hands of the French in Lombardy, and declared that, unless these outrages were stopped and its occupation of Bellinzona recognized, it would take up arms against the King of France. After argument and negotiation with the Diet the French ambassadors agreed that, if the Diet could arrange a truce, the whole question of the title to Bellinzona should be referred to the arbitration of the Confederacy. The Diet pressed for such a settlement, urging upon the Forest Cantons the difficulties of the times and the inopportuneness of a war, but again the Cantons refused to listen, and when in February 1503 a body of Swiss, accompanied by Milanese exiles, crossed the Lombard border and began indiscriminate plundering, the bad feeling on both sides reached a point which made war inevitable. Military preparations were begun even in the Cantons which usually supported the French, and presently a force of 14,000 men stood ready to take the field.

The French in Milan were in no condition to encounter a danger of this magnitude. Their effectives consisted of 500

lances and 8,000 infantry, with fifty guns; the infantry were no match for the Swiss foot, and such on this occasion was the strength of the Swiss in artillery that it was by no means certain that the French would enjoy their usual superiority in that arm. Louis, who was deeply involved in Naples, would find it difficult to send adequate reinforcements; money was scarce; the temper of the Milanese was doubtful; and relations with the Empire were strained. When in March the Swiss crossed the frontier, drove back the French forces which tried to stay their progress, and occupied the country as far as Arona, Louis saw that he must either buy them off or risk a disaster which might imperil his position in Italy. In the treaty of Arona, signed on 10th April 1503,[1] he bowed to the inevitable, ceding Bellinzona in perpetuity and restoring the commercial privileges which the Swiss had enjoyed under the Sforza régime. The obstinate determination of the Forest Cantons and the vengeful energy of the dissatisfied mercenaries had conferred upon the Confederacy an acquisition of first-rate military and economic importance. Nor was this all. If the King of France could not defend his territory against the attack of the Forest Cantons, what would be the issue, should the Swiss ever take united action to challenge his title in the Milanese? It was true that in the Bellinzona dispute Louis had been distracted by other interests and intimidated by the fear of shutting himself out from his best recruiting-ground. Nevertheless, the treaty of Arona threw an ominous shadow across the glittering structure of French power in Italy.

[1] Dumont, *Corps universel diplomatique*, vol. iv, part i, pp. 37–8.

XIX

THE PARTITION OF NAPLES

In ascending the throne of France Louis XII had assumed the title of King of Sicily and Jerusalem as well as that of Duke of Milan, and more than once since his accession he had given the world to understand that he meant to revive the Angevin pretensions to Naples, as soon as he should have possessed himself of the Visconti inheritance in the Milanese. That success in the latter enterprise had confirmed him in his intention to prosecute the former became plain, when within a month of Ludovic's fall the French ambassadors in Venice appeared before the Senate, to propose a joint attack upon the common enemies of France and Venice, particularly the King of Naples, the Turk, the Marquis of Mantua, and the Duke of Ferrara, and an equitable division of the spoils of victory between the King and the Republic. The ambassadors were also charged to say that, in their master's opinion, it would be a good thing to form a general league of friendly powers, and to place the Pope at its head, so that His Holiness might reprove the disaffected in the face of the world and publicly range the Almighty on the side of His Most Christian Majesty and the Republic of St. Mark. The Senate replied that they were always disposed to act in accord with the King, and agreed with him that there was a need to take precautions for his and their future safety. The Republic had an old quarrel with the rulers of Mantua and Ferrara, for they were neighbours who lost no chance to support its enemies, and it would be glad to take possession of their territories. As for Naples and the Turk, Venice would be prepared to act in conformity with His Majesty's wishes; but there was need, the Senate thought, for extreme secrecy; and in the matter of Naples it might be well to pay heed to the suggestions of Ferdinand of Spain, which seemed of a nature both to facilitate the enterprise and to justify it in the eyes of the world.[1]

Venice, which was beginning to repent of the rashness that had brought the French into Italy, did not really intend to support Louis in further schemes of ambition, and no-

[1] Romanin, *Storia documentata di Venezia*, vol. v, pp. 122–3.

thing came of his offers to the Senate. Despite this check, however, it was reported three months later by the Florentine envoys in France, Francesco della Casa and Niccolò Machiavelli, that the projected expedition against Naples was still the talk of Louis' Court. Though the project was much discussed, the envoys did not believe that any attempt would ever be made to carry it out; the affair, they thought, would end in some bargain with King Federigo, whose agent was active at the Court; and, failing agreement, the whole thing would be shelved. There were indications that pointed to the likelihood of a settlement by compromise: the Queen, who was firmly opposed to the enterprise, was understood to have told the King that she would never forgive him, if he were to persist in it; and most of the King's advisers were believed to share the Queen's opinion, being convinced by past experience that in such an undertaking it was difficult to effect a conquest and yet more difficult to keep what might be won. Further, the King was bound to pay heed to the inevitable consequences of the enterprise: the Turk would offer opposition; a threat to Naples might stir the Emperor and the Empire to an activity to which they had not been moved by the loss of Milan; and it was to be presumed that the preparations of the King of Spain, who was known to be arming, were designed for the protection of his kinsman, King Federigo. The result was that Louis was growing anxious, and anxiety was beginning to reconcile him to the idea of some compromise. Moreover, his habitual caution and reluctance to spend money helped to restrain him, especially as the Pisa affair afforded a recent proof that there were occasions when mere prestige could not of itself dispense with the use of force. That which was not in itself easy might be made excessively difficult by the intervention of the Turk or of some other power, and an inability to support the consequent expense would entail a risk of ignominious failure or even of disastrous defeat.[1]

Since the King of France had not hesitated to seize an Imperial fief, it seemed improbable that he would desist from his designs on Naples through fear of Imperial displeasure; nor was it much more likely that he would pay heed to the resentment of the distant Turk. The chief difficulty which

[1] Machiavelli, *Opere*, vol. iii, pp. 160–1.

he must anticipate would be the opposition of the Spanish sovereigns. Ferdinand had organized the alliance by which Charles VIII had been deprived of the fruits of his victories, and the establishment of the French in Milan would make him more determined than before to resist their establishment in Naples. He was in this difficulty, however, that he had his own pretensions to Federigo's throne, and must stultify them, if he were openly to espouse his cause. He had, therefore, devised a scheme by which he might hope to mitigate the evil which he could not wholly prevent. He fitted out an imposing armada at Malaga, and gave out that it was intended to aid Venice against the Turk; but the real object was to intimidate Louis, who would be sure to regard it as the Spanish answer to French preparations. When the menace might be thought to have worked sufficiently upon Louis' mind, he told his representative at the French Court to revive, as of his own motion, the suggestion which had before been made to Charles VIII for the division of the disputed territory. Louis swallowed the bait, and on 11th November 1500 a treaty for the partition of King Federigo's dominions was ratified at Granada.

After some pious platitudes about the evils of war and the blessings of peace and an eloquent reference to the manifest danger from the Turk, the document went on to say that Naples was claimed both by the King of France and by the Spanish sovereigns; that it undoubtedly belonged either to the one or to the others, and to no other person; and that it was notorious that King Federigo had invoked the aid of the Turk, the enemy of all Christendom, and that the Turk was already on the move. Desiring, therefore, to obviate an imminent menace to Christendom, and to remove all occasions of discord, the contracting parties agreed to divide the kingdom of Naples between them, the King of France taking Naples, Gaeta, the Terra di Lavoro, and the Abruzzi, with the title of King of Naples and Jerusalem, and the Spanish sovereigns taking Calabria and Apulia, with the title of Dukes. Should it be found that this division resulted in any inequality in their respective revenues, such inequality was to be adjusted out of the *dogana delle pecore*. Each party would undertake the conquest of the share assigned to him, and the treaty was to be kept secret, until prepara-

tions for a simultaneous occupation should have been completed.[1]

'Such', says the historian of Spain, 'were the terms of this celebrated compact, by which two European potentates coolly carved out and divided between them the entire dominions of a third, who had given no cause for umbrage, and with whom they were both at that time in perfect peace and amity. Similar instances of political robbery (to call it by the coarse name it merits) have occurred in later times; but never one founded on more flimsy pretexts, or veiled under a more detestable mask of hypocrisy.' It was the opinion of the historian that, although the principal odium of the transaction has attached to Ferdinand as the kinsman of the unfortunate King of Naples, his conduct admits of some palliatory considerations that cannot be claimed for Louis, namely, the wrongful act of the first Alfonso in leaving Naples to the bastard line, and the fact that Ferdinand had made some show of asserting his claim, and had never relinquished it.[2] Justice to Louis demands that this view should not remain unchallenged. It is not true that both the signatories of the compact of spoliation were in peace and amity with their intended prey. The attitude of the King of France had never been doubtful; he had publicly proclaimed his right to the title which Federigo bore, and had openly avowed his intention of following in the footsteps of his predecessor and occupying his dominions. Federigo knew well what he must expect from Louis. It was not so with Ferdinand, however. Ferdinand had permitted himself to be reckoned as a friend; from Ferdinand might fairly be expected a renewal of the protection which had already been extended by the legitimate to the illegitimate line; and the essential iniquity of Ferdinand's conduct lay in the fact that his unsuspecting victim would open his arms to the Spanish armies, whose mission was to deal him a felon blow unawares. Judged by ethical standards, the conduct of Louis and the conduct of Ferdinand stand on different planes. From a political point of view, however, the action of Louis is more difficult to defend. The treaty of Granada, though it might not reflect upon his honour, as it reflects upon Ferdinand's,

[1] Dumont, *Corps universel diplomatique*, vol. iii, part ii, pp. 444–7.

[2] Prescott, *History of the Reign of Ferdinand and Isabella*, pp. 505–6.

was of a sort to raise grave doubts of his wisdom, for the partition of Naples threw Italy open to the entrance of a power which it should have been the first aim of French policy to exclude. The motives by which Louis was induced to become an accessory to Ferdinand's crime are a matter for conjecture. It may be that with his predecessor's failure before his eyes he doubted his ability to retain a hold on Naples in the face of Spanish opposition; or he may have been guided by the perfidious counsels of the Venetian Signory; or he may have yielded to the pressure of courtiers, who were eager to regain the good things with which Charles VIII had enriched his companions, and were careless of the means by which their object was achieved. Whatever his motives, the event would show that in the bargain to which he had set his hand he had been duped by a ruler more cunning than himself, of whom it has been truly said that he always profited by the mistakes of others, paid no respect to his engagements, and was so artful in his perfidies and so opportune in his self-seeking that he deceived his neighbours without forfeiting their confidence, and always gained without ever suffering a loss.[1]

With an illuminating letter, in which the Spanish sovereigns sought to justify their conduct, we may take leave of the treaty of Granada, and proceed with our narrative. 'Since the time of King Charles of France until the present day', they wrote in July 1501, 'we have done nothing else except endeavour to obtain, as well by deeds of arms, when restitution was made of Naples, as by means of negotiation, to dissuade the said King Charles, and afterwards King Louis, who now is, from his attempts on the kingdom of Naples. But, in spite of it all, we have never had any gratitude shown us by King Fadrique for what we formerly did for him, nor any amity or brotherhood, but quite the contrary. Notwithstanding, we have not ceased to travail for him, endeavouring by all possible means to bring about a reconciliation between him and the King of France, in order that he might remain secure in his kingdom, and that the King of France might desist from the enterprise he had in hand. Moreover, we negotiated with the Pope and the King of the Romans, and with the Venetians, to drive away the

[1] Mignet, *Rivalité de François I et de Charles-Quint*, 3rd edit., vol. i, p. 31.

King of France from Naples, but could not succeed in our endeavours.

'On the contrary, the Pope invited him over and aided him; and the King of the Romans, with the members of the Empire, made a truce with him, and the Venetians took part with him. On the other hand, King Fadrique sought aid from the Turks, giving us notice of the same by his ambassadors more than a year ago, and certified us of his determination, notwithstanding that we opposed him, and censured him, and endeavoured to turn him away from his purpose. At last we told him that we should be his chiefest enemies if he should persist in his purpose, but we could never prevail upon him to relinquish it.

'Moreover, we concluded no kind of treaty or agreement, or anything that might be construed as such, with King Fadrique, nor in any other manner did we enter into an obligation to give him aid. For even had we desired to aid him, we could not have done it, on account of the peace we had negotiated with the King of France at the beginning of his reign. Besides, we had a desire to maintain peace, and also had no need to undertake such a war, King Fadrique himself having no wish that we should. Again, he never even gave us thanks for what we had formerly done for him, nor was there any amity or relation subsisting between us.

'The Turks also having taken part in the matter, that alone would have been cause sufficient for us, not only to refuse to aid King Fadrique, but to oppose him. Besides, the King of France justified himself to us, and assured us he had always desired to preserve our friendship. Therefore, that no rupture might take place between us on account of Naples, he said it would be agreeable to him if we would divide that kingdom with him, seeing that it belonged either to us or to him, and to no other person whatever. Being determined, for the causes above mentioned, not to aid King Fadrique in the defence of Naples, we thought it well to accept the offer of the King of France. We were the more moved to do this, because we had no desire to take upon ourselves the responsibility of so unjust a proceeding as that of affording succour to one who had no right to the kingdom of Naples. Further, seeing King Fadrique was and still is determined to have recourse to the Turks, it was our duty

for the sake of the Christian Faith, to unite ourselves with Christian Princes. Besides, the King of Naples would not be inconvenienced by this agreement if the King of France should afterwards relinquish this enterprise. If, on the other hand, the King of Naples were to lose his kingdom, it would be much better we should take the half of it (since the better right is ours), than lose the whole. For King Fadrique has no forces wherewith to defend himself, and we have no right to join ourselves with one who receives aid from the Turks.'[1]

The treaty signed, the champions of Christendom set to work to equip themselves for their holy enterprise, and by the summer of 1501 they were ready to deliver their joint attack upon the confederate of the Infidel. A French expeditionary force had been mustered in the Milanese, and in June it set out, marching in two divisions, the one by Pontremoli, Lucca, and Cascina, the other by Bologna, Imola, Faenza, and the Sieve valley, with orders to effect a junction at Siena before moving forward upon Rome. A thousand lances were sent on the service, with 4,000 Swiss and 6,000 French and Gascon foot, and a powerful artillery accompanied them; thirty-six gun-carriages and a hundred ammunition wagons were counted in the Pisa suburbs, when a halt was called there for a night. D'Aubigny was in command, and it spoke much for the disciplinary powers of the veteran leader that Tuscany suffered by none of the disorders which usually marked the progress of French troops. 'A thing worthy of much praise was that by the prudence of its commander this army marched with perfect order and decorum; payment for provisions supplied to the troops was made under regulations settled by the general in accord with the Florentine commissaries; and no disorders accompanied the passage of the army'.[2]

As the troops were nearing Rome, the French and Spanish ambassadors presented themselves before the Pope in Consistory, informed him of the secret treaty, and requested for their masters the investiture of the Regno as apportioned by the treaty. By a Bull dated 25th June[3] Alexander complied

[1] *Calendar of State Papers, Spanish*, vol. i, pp. 259–61.

[2] Jacopo Nardi, *Istoria della Città di Firenze*, ed. A. Gelli, vol. i, pp. 209–10.

[3] Dumont, *Corps universel diplomatique*, Supplement, vol. i, part i, p. 1.

with the request. When the existence of the treaty became known, says Guicciardini, the astonishment was general, people being equally amazed at the folly of the King of France and at the perfidy of the King of Spain. They could scarcely believe that Louis of his own free will had given up half the Regno, thereby introducing a formidable rival into Italy, where till then his own supremacy had been unquestioned. No less startling was the discovery that Ferdinand, for the sake of territorial gain, had conspired against a King of his own Royal blood, and, the better to conquer him, had deluded him with promises of help.[1] The popular amazement was not diminished by the attitude of the Holy See. The French captains were sumptuously entertained by the Cardinal of San Severino, and on the day following the grant of the investiture d'Aubigny was received in public audience by the Pope, who would scarcely permit him to kneel, but embraced him, and caused him to sit by his side. Two days later, when the army marched from Rome in battle array, the Pope was present, to bestow his apostolic benediction upon the departing host.

Meanwhile, Federigo, ignorant of Ferdinand's treachery, and supposing that the Spanish armada had been fitted out in his behalf, had thrown Calabria open to Gonsalvo, sent his young son, Ferdinand, to Taranto, arranged for the Colonnas to join his standards, and then sat down at San Germano, to await the coming of the French. On learning the fatal news of the Franco-Spanish agreement, he gave up the idea of offering resistance in the field, and fell back upon Capua, where the Colonnas were to join him. Leaving Fabrizio Colonna in that city with three hundred men-at-arms, some light horse, and three thousand foot, and entrusting the defence of the capital to Fabrizio's brother, Prospero, Federigo himself fell back on Aversa with the rest of his forces. As the French advanced without encountering the smallest opposition at the hands of a population which was terrified into submission the more easily in that it was already disaffected to the Government, he gave up hope of holding out in Aversa, and fell back upon the capital.

Leaving Rome on 28th June, d'Aubigny that day occupied Marino, which the Colonnas had abandoned, and, after

[1] Guicciardini, *Storia d'Italia*, ed. A. Gherardi, vol. ii, p. 19.

plundering and burning it, moved on by way of Velletri to Rocca Secca, distant a few miles from San Germano on the Neapolitan frontier. Here, like Charles VIII, he expected to encounter the first opposition, only to find upon his approach, as Charles had found, that a place of great defensive possibilities had been abandoned before the attackers came in sight. In company with Cesare Borgia, who joined him at the head of his band, he crossed the frontier, and on 8th July was at Tiano. His immediate objective was Capua, in which place Fabrizio Colonna awaited his coming at the head of the large garrison which Federigo had entrusted to him, and where the French would not enjoy their usual superiority in artillery, since Fabrizio was strong in guns, including some of those taken from the French five or six years before. After occupying the further bank of the Volturno and reducing smaller places in the neighbourhood, the French sent to demand the surrender of Capua, which was refused, except upon the condition, to which d'Aubigny would not agree, that the French army should not enter the city. Capua was then invested, the bombardment began, and on 24th July the city was in the hands of the French. The manner of its fall is the subject of conflicting accounts.[1] According to one story, d'Aubigny agreed to accept a surrender upon receipt of a ransom of 40,000 ducats, payable on the next morning; that day being a Sunday, nothing was done to provide the ransom; and the French, suspecting treachery, delivered a sudden attack, which took the defenders by surprise. Other accounts more or less agree that after some days of bombardment and the infliction of much damage upon the walls the defenders requested terms of capitulation, were then foolish enough to relax their watchfulness during the ensuing conferences, and so offered to the French infantry an opportunity to enter through unguarded breaches. Whatever the doubt about the way in which the French got in, the character of their subsequent conduct is but too well established, the sack of Capua taking rank among the most brutal exploits of an age which has many atrocities to its discredit. The author of the official French account admits that his compatriots 'entered with tumultuous noise, slaughter, and

[1] Sanuto, *I Diarii*, vol. iv, cols. 76–8; Guicciardini, *Storia d'Italia*, ed. Gherardi, vol. ii, pp. 21–2.

bloodshed. The footmen, being the most lightly armed, were the first to get in, and disposed of all whom they found in arms either in the streets or hidden in the houses, without showing mercy to any man of whatsoever condition, so that the blood of the slain ran in great streams down the streets. . . . Besides the slaughter of men, many women and girls were violated, which is the most terrible of the excesses of war. The footmen of the Duke of Valentinois' band carried matters so far as to take off thirty of the most beautiful as captives to Rome. . . . Houses were broken open, doors smashed in, and all valuables looted by any who could lay hands on them, so that many French and Swiss were made rich for life. . . . So bloody was the butchery that seven or eight thousand persons lost their lives'.[1] Guicciardini recorded that 'a thing every whit as horrible as the massacre was the barbarous martyrdom of the women, who, whatever their rank, and even when they were dedicated to religion, fell a miserable prey to the lust and avarice of the conquerors, many being afterwards sold in Rome for trifling sums; and it was said that some, fearing death less than dishonour, threw themselves into wells or into the river. Besides other eternally infamous crimes, this also became known, that when many women, after escaping the fury of the first assault, took refuge in a certain tower, the Duke of Valentinois . . . insisted upon seeing them, and after a careful scrutiny selected and retained forty of the fairest'.[2]

This terrifying tragedy put an end to all further thoughts of resistance. It so happened that just after the sack a herald came from King Federigo, to ransom certain prisoners. D'Aubigny had him taken all over Capua, to see the corpses of the slain and the desolation of the city. Then he said to him: 'Go and tell them in Naples that to-morrow I shall be under their walls, and that worse things than these will befall them, if they do not accept my terms.'[3] The threat was superfluous, for the news of the sack had spread everywhere, and caused general consternation. Gaeta hastened to offer

[1] Jean d'Auton, *Chroniques de Louis XII*, ed. R. de Maulde, vol. ii, pp. 60–2.

[2] Guicciardini, *Storia d'Italia*, ed. Gherardi, vol. ii, p. 22; *cf.* Matarazzo, 'Cronaca della Città di Perugia,' in *Archivio Storico Italiano*, Series I, vol. xvi, part ii, p. 184.

[3] Sanuto, *I Diarii*, vol. iv, col. 78.

its submission, Aversa opened its gates, and the whole Abruzzi district yielded tamely to La Palice. Having rested his army for two days, d'Aubigny moved forwards to Naples. His heralds presented themselves in the city on 29th July; next day the barons sent a deputation to offer homage to the King of France; on 2nd August Federigo, who had taken refuge in the Castel Nuovo, retired to Ischia; and on the 4th the French general entered Naples at the head of his troops. Meanwhile Gonsalvo, who had been welcomed in the south, since he came in the guise of a defender, had thrown off the mask and set himself to grab the spoils which the treaty of Granada assigned to his master. In that undertaking he had experienced few difficulties, the Calabrias and Apulia submitting without resistance save for Manfredonia, which he quickly captured, and for Taranto, which had given asylum to Federigo's young son, and under the inspiration of his presence bade defiance to its assailants.

Before leaving the Castel Nuovo, Federigo had succeeded in negotiating an agreement with the French leader: he was to surrender all the strong places in that part of the Regno which was claimed by Louis XII; he was to be permitted to retire to Ischia and to retain possession of the island for six months, during which time he might go whithersoever he might please outside the Regno; apart from the artillery taken from Charles VIII he was to be permitted to remove all or any of the contents of the castles at Naples; and the capital was to be guaranteed against ill treatment at the hands of d'Aubigny's troops. The terms were generous, and did not commend themselves to Philippe de Ravenstein, Governor of Genoa, who reached Naples on 6th August in command of a French fleet. Ravenstein refused to allow the capitulation to be ratified, and it was with difficulty that d'Aubigny saved Naples from the soldiers in the fleet, who had missed the opportunity which their comrades on land had enjoyed at Capua, and had been looking forward to their own share of good fortune, when the capital should lie at their mercy. D'Aubigny saved Naples, but he could not save its sovereign. With his asylum at Ischia at the mercy of the fleet, Federigo must surrender unconditionally to the French, unless he should prefer to offer his submission to their Spanish allies. That alternative was abhorrent to him,

for his feelings towards Ferdinand were such as an honourable man would naturally entertain for the blackguard author of his ruin. Against the King of France, his open enemy, he cherished no such grudge, and on the suggestion of Ravenstein he decided to throw himself upon Louis' mercy. His confidence was not wholly misplaced; it was true that he lost his freedom, but he was received in France with great courtesy, and found in the Duchy of Anjou with its rent-roll of 30,000 *l.t.* a year a partial consolation for the loss of his throne.

His exile would have been shared by his young son, the Duke of Calabria, had it been in the character of Ferdinand of Spain to atone for a political crime by a seasonable exhibition of generosity. The young Duke fell into Gonsalvo's hands, when Taranto, besieged by Ferdinand's armies on land and blockaded by his fleets at sea, succumbed at last on 1st March 1502. It was expressly provided in the pact of capitulation that the Duke should be free to join his father in France, but it did not suit Ferdinand that the ex-King and his heir should both pass into the custody of a rival sovereign, and Gonsalvo was ordered to ignore his plighted word and send the Duke to Spain. Even in this painful choice between disobedience and dishonour the Spanish general may perhaps have reckoned himself to be more fortunate than his colleague in the French service, for no sooner had d'Aubigny completed his work of conquest than he was superseded by a young nobleman of high lineage, the Duke of Nemours, who came to Naples bearing the Royal commission to rule the country as Viceroy and Lieutenant-Governor. The brave old soldier felt that he was badly used, and did not scruple to show it by requesting that he might be recalled. Even the official historian hazarded the reflection that the supersession of a distinguished veteran by a fledgling lord was neither tactful nor wise: 'and thus', was his comment, 'there came the beginning of divisions between the leaders of the army, a thing dangerous and disastrous in time of war.' [1]

For the fleet which had sailed into the Bay of Naples under Ravenstein's command the subjugation of the Regno and the capture of Federigo were merely incidents by the way, its

[1] Jean d'Auton, *Chroniques de Louis XII*, ed. R. de Maulde, vol. ii, p. 98.

real mission being to go to the succour of Rhodes and Venice against their dangerous Turkish foes. Venice had not been faring well in her contest with the Infidel, and stood sorely in need of the help which Louis had promised her, when he had purchased her connivance in the expropriation of Ludovic Sforza. The promise had been redeemed in part two years before, when in August 1499 a squadron under Guy de Blanchefort, originally intended for the defence of Rhodes, had upon the appeal of the Signory been ordered to turn aside and serve under the orders of Grimani, the Venetian admiral. Blanchefort had found Grimani barring the way to the Adriatic against the advance of a huge Turkish armada. His own squadron consisted of sixteen ships, of which four were of the first class; it was well equipped, and carried six or seven thousand combatants; but it was short of provisions, and must seek an early decision. The opportunity which it desired was quickly offered. Blanchefort joined Grimani on 18th August. Two days later the Turkish fleet came out of Navarino Bay. Fire-ships were launched against it, but were lost prematurely, and an attack by the French ships, accompanied by the Venetian galleasses, was beaten off. Next day there was a council of war, in which Blanchefort, to encourage the Venetians, offered to attack with his whole squadron of big ships, his plan being that three other squadrons should attack at the same time, the galleys also rowing in to bring the enemy ships under the fire of their guns, and the remaining Venetian vessels being held in reserve to support the attacking squadrons, as circumstances might require. On the morrow, 22nd August, the attack was delivered in accordance with Blanchefort's plan, and would have been wholly successful, had not Grimani and the Venetians sheered off from battle at the very moment when their help would have sufficed to give the *coup de grâce* to the retreating enemy. Pausing in their retreat at sight of Grimani's inopportune manœuvre, the Turks presently resumed the offensive, and drove the French back. Three days later Blanchefort once again engaged the enemy with some initial success, but once again got no support from Grimani, and after these experiences he resolved to desist from attacks in which his squadron ran no small risk of destruction for lack of Venetian support. Thereupon the Turkish fleet joined

hands with the land forces, and the fall of Lepanto ushered in a period of unbroken Turkish success.[1] 'You can tell the Doge', said the Grand Vizier, 'that he has done wedding the sea. It is our turn now.'[2]

The historian of the French navy pauses in his narrative to pass an interesting comment upon these events. 'The battle of Lepanto in 1571 marks a date in European history. It meant the sudden arrest of Islam, the turning back of the Asiatic invasion, the salvation of Christian Europe. Now all this might well have happened seventy-two years earlier. In the same waters forces just as imposing—500 ships and 60,000 men—had confronted one another. To decide the fate of two religions, if not of two races, there was wanting only a Don John of Austria; and the circumstances in the two battles being the same, there was never a clearer proof that the personality of a commander-in-chief plays a supreme part in war.'[3]

Had the Crusading spirit still lived in Europe, the tidings of the Turkish successes would have sounded as a trumpet-call to action. But that spirit was dead, and Christendom was as a house divided against itself. Venice and the Rhodians began to quarrel in the presence of the common enemy. The Spaniards, who had a fleet at sea, were pursuing their own ends, and declined to share in a common effort. Portugal pleaded poverty as an excuse for inaction. Henry Tudor politely expressed his profound regret that distance should preclude the possibility of his participating in the holy task. The Head of Christendom himself was not ashamed to leave the Venetians in the lurch, and to promise galleys without ever sending them. Only in France was there a response to the Venetian appeal, where Louis was in honour bound to fulfil his obligations to the Signory, and where the feelings of his pious consort were wrought upon by the progress of the Crescent and the humiliation of the Cross. In the latter months of 1500 and the earlier of 1501 there was great activity in all the maritime centres of Louis' and Anne's dominions. To Charles VIII's former favourite, de Vesc, was entrusted the task of fitting out ships in the harbours of

[1] C. de la Roncière, *Histoire de la marine française*, vol. iii, pp. 38–44.
[2] H. F. Brown, *Venice. An Historical Sketch*, 2nd edit., p. 333.
[3] C. de la Roncière, *Histoire de la marine française*, vol. iii, p. 38.

Provence; other squadrons were prepared for service in the ports of Normandy and Brittany; and about the time when d'Aubigny began his march on Naples an imposing fleet of sailing-ships and galleys was mustered at Genoa. The ordinary resources of the Crown being insufficient to finance the special effort, the clergy of the kingdom had been pressed for payment of a tithe in aid of the Crusade, and d'Amboise admitted that 36,000 *l.t.* had been spent upon the fleet. Here were the *Cordelière* and the *Charente*, the fruit of the genius of a Breton naval constructor, who by his invention of the port-hole had made possible the construction of vessels of dimensions never before seen. The *Charente* carried 1,200 combatants in addition to her crew; she bristled with guns; and her speed was such that only the vessels of the pirate and the sea-rover could show her their heels. Here, too, were the galleys from Provence, commanded by Prégent de Bidoux, for whom Charles VIII had created the office of Général des Galères de France, and who had equipped no inconsiderable number of them at his own expense. This brave and resourceful Gascon sailor had already begun to earn for himself the name which was to stand out pre-eminent in the naval annals of the time. He had served in the fleet which Blanchefort had led to the East in 1499, and despite the discouragements of that humiliating year he had contrived to give the Turks a taste of his methods. At Volo, north of Negropont, the Turks had established an arsenal for supplying oars to their fleet, and had placed it under the protection of a guard of a thousand men. In April 1500, when there were thousands of oars in stock, Prégent appeared upon the scene, cleared the beach by the fire of his guns, sent a landing-party ashore to burn the arsenal, and eventually retreated in safety after defeating a Turkish squadron of some dozen sail. Such was the fleet which had dropped its anchors in the Bay of Naples at the time of King Federigo's flight to Ischia.

Ravenstein spent ten days at Naples, and on 16th August weighed anchor, to join the Venetians in the eastern Mediterranean. His progress was slow, and by the end of September he had got no farther than Zante. Here he heard that the only other Christian force at sea besides his own was a fleet of Venetian galleys, and that this fleet was lying at

Corfu. The Venetians desired that he should put back and join them, but that plan was strongly condemned by Prégent, who argued that a retrograde movement would give the enemy time to prepare his defences, might be fatal to the Rhodians, who stood in jeopardy of destruction, and must prejudice the chances of Ravenstein's own armada, whose aim must be to deliver its attack before the storms of winter should come and catch it in their grip. On the advice of a Genoese officer, who had seen service with the enemy, it was decided to attack Mytilene, which was believed to be rich and vulnerable, and was thought likely to prove a convenient base for operations in the region of the Dardanelles. The decision was communicated to the Venetians, who decided to join their allies, and on 23rd October the united fleets appeared off Mytilene, when Prégent's galleys stood in under a heavy fire to reconnoitre the position. The hope that Mytilene was a plum to be had for the picking turned out to be fallacious. The siege was prosecuted with vigour, but the efforts of the besiegers were met with as great a vigour in the defence. It was soon apparent that Ravenstein's armada could not stay the pace: many of his men were wounded; many more fell sick; supplies and munitions began to run short; and there was no sign of the Rhodians, upon whose co-operation the French had counted. On 29th October Ravenstein accepted defeat, re-embarked his guns, and raised the siege. But winter was at hand, and he had delayed too long. We think of the Mediterranean as a placid, sunlit lake, but the reality is sometimes very different, and during that November there was wild weather in those waters. The French ships, full of sick and wounded men, were caught in it. The *Lomellina*, Ravenstein's flag-ship, dismasted and helpless, became the plaything of the gale, and was flung on the rocks of Cerigo. Four hundred of her crew were drowned; the admiral and his companions, who were on the upper decks, scrambled in scanty clothing to the shore, where they were refused assistance by the barbarous inhabitants of the island. At dawn another great vessel came in sight, battling with the mighty seas. It was the *Pensée*, with seven hundred men on board. When within a stone's-throw of the spot where the *Lomellina* had been wrecked, the *Pensée* was suddenly raised aloft by a huge wave and

dashed down on a reef, where she sank instantly under the very eyes of the *Lomellina's* horrified crew. No help could be given, and only two men escaped, washed up unconscious by the waves. For twenty-one days Ravenstein and his party wandered about the island without food or clothing, begging from door to door, and at every one being pitilessly refused. At last, when several members of the party had succumbed to hunger and exposure, a Venetian galley touched at the island, and landed a party to enforce proper treatment of the castaways. It then gave information to a Genoese squadron, and Ravenstein was fetched away. The last French Crusade had run its inglorious course.[1]

Meanwhile there was trouble brewing in Naples, where the robber bands, which had united for a stroke of brigandage, were beginning to fall out over the division of the plunder. The treaty of Granada was vitiated by one grave defect; it lacked precision, having taken no account of the difficulty that, 'if there was any region in mediaeval Italy where provinces were subject to change in nomenclature and extent, that region was assuredly the kingdom of Naples.'[2] As a result, the partition which the treaty purported to effect was in part disputable and in part incomplete. It had assigned Naples, Gaeta, the Abruzzi, and the Terra di Lavoro to the King of France, and had allotted Apulia and Calabria to the King of Spain; but the Regno comprised districts other than these, and about them nothing had been said. No mention had been made of the Capitanate, between Apulia and the Abruzzi, none of the Basilicate, between Apulia and Calabria, and none of the Principate, between the Basilicate and the Terra di Lavoro. The Spaniards claimed that the Basilicate and the Principate belonged to Calabria, and invoked Ferrante's delimitation of the provinces for fiscal purposes as proof that the Capitanate formed part of Apulia. The French disputed the first claim, and retorted to the other that the Capitanate was completely cut off from Apulia by the river Ofanto, and had always been treated as part of the Abruzzi by recent administrative usage. Of the disputed territories the Capitanate was by far the most important, since its owner would not only control the

[1] C. de la Roncière, *Histoire de la marine française*, vol. iii, pp. 49–56.

[2] Cipolla, *Storia delle Signorie Italiane*, vol. ii, p. 783.

collection of the *dogana delle pecore*, the chief source of Neapolitan revenue, but might also deprive the Abruzzi and the Terra di Lavoro of the supplies upon which they were dependent in a sterile year. The clause in the treaty which pointed to the *dogana* as a means of adjusting inequalities in the territorial division offered a basis of compromise, should compromise be desired; but if the prospects of a peaceable solution depended upon the tempers of the disputants, the outlook was not hopeful. Taking advantage of the absence of Gonsalvo's army, whilst detained before Taranto, the French entered the disputed territories, and began to occupy the strong places. The Spaniards replied by sending their officials to hold courts at Atripalda, a place in close proximity to Avellino, where the French judges sat; and as soon as the fall of Taranto had freed his hands, Gonsalvo marched northwards with all his forces. Anxious to avert a rupture, with its baneful consequences to their country, the Neapolitan barons then intervened, and induced the rival leaders to meet in conference and seek for an amicable solution of their differences; but when the meeting took place on 1st April 1502, the leaders could agree upon nothing except a reference of the dispute to their respective sovereigns, with an undertaking not to begin hostilities until their decisions should be known.

With the two armies in contact within the disputed area, the situation was very delicate, for national jealousies were alive, and when the French had passed through Rome, there had been an ugly riot in the streets, because some Spanish residents had spoken disparagingly of King Louis' pretensions in Naples. The truce interposed a frail barrier between enemies who longed to fly at each other's throats. Nemours himself, who knew that his own army was larger and better equipped than the Spanish, desired nothing so eagerly as an immediate rupture. Without awaiting formal instructions from France, he suddenly summoned Gonsalvo to evacuate the Capitanate, threatening him with immediate war in the event of a refusal. Gonsalvo paying no heed to his ultimatum, he attacked Troja, which the Spaniards had occupied, asserting that the occupation was contrary to the terms of the partition treaty. With this incident the quarrel passed from words to blows.

Nemours was probably wise to precipitate a conflict, if conflict there must be. Gonsalvo had received no reinforcements, nor anything worth mentioning in the way of money, munitions, or supplies, since he had landed in Calabria many months before, and the French enjoyed a definite superiority in all the constituent elements of military strength. Hoping to hold out till reinforced and resupplied from home, and to wear down the spirit of the enemy by inaction and delay, Gonsalvo retired with the bulk of his forces to Barletta, a sea-port in Apulia, where he might expect to maintain contact with the Spanish fleets that could make good his wants and, if need be, facilitate his escape. Such troops as could be spared from the defence of his main base he stationed in Andria, Canosa, Bari, and other neighbouring places. When informed of this retirement, the French leaders met in council, to settle their plan of campaign. An Angevin lord, who took part in the deliberations, proposed an attack upon Bari, saying that it belonged to the Duchess Isabella, who favoured the Spaniards, and that its capture would provide a base whence all the Adriatic coast might be subdued. But this counsel did not commend itself to the chivalrous instincts of such soldiers as La Palice and Yves d'Alègre, who objected that it would ill become brave men to make war on a woman, and pleaded for an attack on Barletta, where they would have to do with the enemy general and the flower of his troops. The fortifications of the place were antiquated, they said; the walls had no bastions, and could not withstand gunfire; and if Barletta should fall, the war would be over almost before it had begun. Nemours agreed that the main French effort should be directed against Gonsalvo's base, but, thinking it impossible to carry the place by assault, he decided that he must strive to reduce it by cutting off supplies. The decision was not in itself wise, when so much was to be hoped of speedy action, and it gained nothing in the mode of its execution. Alleging that want of water would make it impossible for the whole army to remain before Barletta, Nemours contented himself with blockading the place from a distance with a part of his forces, and sent the rest to occupy the regions which the Spaniards had evacuated. His true motive was believed to be a dislike of d'Aubigny, who was known to be jealous of him and was understood to have

criticized his leadership. D'Aubigny was given a third of the available forces and sent into Calabria. In that province, which was full of Angevins, he was remembered for the wisdom and moderation of his rule during the former French occupation and for the brilliance of his generalship during Charles VIII's wars. As he advanced, the cities, one after another, opened their gates, and with scarcely a blow struck he moved in triumphal progress to the shores of the Gulf of Messina.

The folly of Nemours' dilatory tactics might be gauged by the precariousness of Gonsalvo's hold on Barletta. He could not pay his men, because it was long since his war-chest had been replenished from home. He could scarcely feed them, because Prégent and his galleys cruised off the coast and intercepted the vessels which bore supplies from Sicily. It was doubtful whether his antiquated fortifications could withstand attack, and it was certain that he must not look for speedy relief. Where another man might have sat down in listless dejection beneath a burden that seemed insupportable, Gonsalvo exhibited the skill and courage, the cautious enterprise, and patient endurance which had won for him the title of the Great Captain. Frequent sorties kept up the spirits of the men, and a series of small successes preserved among them a belief in their own efficiency and valour. He assured them that his emissaries were active, and that help was at hand; horse and foot would soon be sent from Spain, the Emperor was recruiting Germans to oppose the Swiss, supplies were coming from Sicily, and money would be advanced by Venice. With his own money and with money borrowed from his officers he bought arms from a Venetian ship which put in at Barletta, and supplied some of the wants of his ill-equipped force. Inspired by his example, his men forgot their grievances, laughed at danger, and made light of privation; and the maintenance of such a temper among troops so unfavourably circumstanced is in itself a proof that Gonsalvo possessed the magic touch of the born leader of men.

He was aided in his task by the ineptitude of the enemy, whose languid conduct of the siege was broken only by fits of misdirected energy. Upon his retreat to Barletta he had left in Canosa a garrison of 700 men under the command of Pedro

Navarro, an officer destined to win fame in the Italian wars. In July 1502 Nemours began his operations against Barletta by an attack upon this stronghold. Navarro put up a valiant defence, and, although his walls crumbled to dust beneath a sustained bombardment, he contrived to repulse repeated assaults. On the orders of Gonsalvo, who sent to tell him that relief was impossible, and that he would do better to yield an unimportant post than to endanger valuable lives, he agreed to surrender, if permitted to march out with arms and property, to rejoin his chief in Barletta. Whilst Louis d'Ars moved against Bisceglie, and captured it with the willing help of Bayard and other volunteers, the main French army, joined by two or three thousand Swiss, whom Louis had sent by sea from Genoa, was led by Nemours to make a demonstration before Barletta. Finding that the enemy did not stir, the French general defied his adversary to come out to battle, when Gonsalvo answered that he was much obliged by the invitation, but that it was his wont to fight when it suited him, and not when it suited his enemy to invite him. Then, as the French withdrew in careless confusion, he sent out all his cavalry, with two or three infantry corps in reserve, to pursue and engage the rear-guard. Turning upon the Spanish horse, who fell back before them, the French were lured into a position in which the ambushed Spanish infantry could close in upon their flanks, and they did not extricate themselves until they had suffered considerable damage. The French army then sat down in neighbouring places to invest Barletta.

Nemours' conduct of the war might, perhaps, have been less languid, had the backing of the home Government been more energetic. Louis had shown no lack of keenness, when the breach with Spain had first occurred, dispatching bodies of Swiss to Naples, taking Angevin barons into his service, and preparing to go in person to Italy. Lulled into a false security by Gonsalvo's apparent helplessness, however, he had soon begun to neglect Naples in his preoccupation with the affairs of northern Italy, where the trouble with the Forest Cantons had become acute, and where the Pope and Cesare Borgia were causing embarrassment. Towards the close of the previous year Cesare had resumed his operations in Romagna, and had added Pesaro, Rimini, and Faenza to

his former conquests. With a view to attaching Piero de' Medici more firmly to his cause, he had then made a threat against Florence, when the frightened city had been glad to buy him off by the grant of a *condotta*. After occupying Piombino, he had returned to Rome, leaving the conduct of future operations in the hands of his lieutenant, Vitellozzo Vitelli. Abetted by the Medicis, Vitelli in June 1502 procured that Arezzo should rebel against Florence, whilst about the same time Pisa offered herself to Cesare. Leaving Rome on receipt of this intelligence, Cesare entered the territory of the Duke of Urbino, and on 21st June seized his capital. Intensely alarmed by this act of aggression, the Florentines appealed to the King of France, with whom they had recently negotiated a new agreement; and Louis, himself none too well pleased with Cesare's proceedings, decided to leave at once for Italy. Had the fate of Florence alone been at stake, he would not have troubled himself, for he had not yet forgiven her for the Pisa fiasco, and complained that she had failed to give him proper support in the Neapolitan war. But his own most cherished interests were bound up with the fate of a place which formed an essential link in the communications with Naples, and in the lately negotiated agreement he had formally undertaken the protection of the Tuscan Republic. When informed of the rebellion of Arezzo and the capture of Urbino, he sent a peremptory message to Italy that he would brook no interference with Florence. Cesare realized that he had gone too far, tried to excuse himself by laying the blame on his lieutenant, and hastened northwards to meet, and, if it might be, to pacify, the offended monarch.

A task in its nature difficult would become no easier, if Louis should listen to the numerous enemies of the Borgias, who were also hurrying northwards to meet him, because they saw in his annoyance a chance to set him against his presumptuous *protégé*. They were doomed to disappointment, which Guicciardini thought in no way surprising, because that which is generally desired does not often occur, since the wills of the few rarely coincide with the wishes of the many, and it is by the wills of the few that the course of events is usually determined. It so happened in this instance, because the King was guided by his private interests. The

Pope worked hard to conciliate him, and the Cardinal of Rouen also laboured to preserve an accord, not in the King's interests, but in his own, wanting a prolongation of his Legatine authority and the promotion of Cardinals who would help him to become Pope. The conditions of the moment also tended in the same direction: the Emperor was working for an agreement with the Pope; the Venetians were jealous of Louis' position in Italy; the Swiss were giving trouble over Bellinzona; and Louis had on his hands the quarrel with Spain over Naples. In these circumstances it was clearly undesirable that he should quarrel with the Pope as well, especially since His Holiness was making tempting offers to help him in the Neapolitan war.[1] The precise nature of the bargain between Louis and the Borgias is not known, but it may be inferred that the Pope promised that Cesare should aid the French with his men-at-arms upon condition of being pardoned for his acts of aggression in Tuscany and of being permitted to pursue his schemes in Romagna. Thus it came about, to the general surprise and disgust, that Cesare came to Milan to be cursed and remained to be blessed. Jean d'Auton attributed the miracle to the adroitness which enabled the supple Italian to regain his former place in the King's affections, and he noted that the place was recovered so completely that the pair were inseparable.[2] Writing from Milan on 8th August to tell Isabella d'Este that Cesare had arrived, the Mantuan agent expatiated at length upon the cordiality with which he had been received. 'The King', he related, 'met the Duke, as he was coming from a party at the house of Arasimo di Trivulzio. Embracing him joyfully, he carried him off to the Castello, where he put him in a room adjoining his own, saw personally to the ordering of his dinner, and that same evening dropped in on him several times, sometimes in the most unceremonious fashion. Servants and seneschals were appointed to wait upon the Duke, and, since he was travelling without baggage, he was given the run of the Royal wardrobe. If Cesare had been his son or his brother, the King could not have done more for him.'[3]

[1] Guicciardini, *Storia d'Italia*, ed. Gherardi, vol. ii, p. 38.

[2] Jean d'Auton, *Chroniques de Louis XII*, ed. R. de Maulde, vol. iii, p. 31.

[3] Beltrami, *Il Castello di Milano sotto il dominio dei Visconti e degli Sforza*, p. 534.

In his preoccupation with these affairs Louis paid little attention to the war in Naples, and, as the months passed and Nemours did nothing, or worse than nothing, the general expectation of a French victory began to undergo a change. In August 1502, soon after the opening of the conflict, Giustinian, the Venetian ambassador in Rome, reported that the news from Naples was favourable to the French, who declared with the boastfulness characteristic of their nation that the Spaniards, if they should wait to be attacked, would find out to their cost the meaning of *furia francese*.[1] In September and October Sanuto recorded that the French were prospering: Gonsalvo was shut up in Barletta; nearly all Apulia had hoisted the French flag; almost the whole of the Otranto district was in their hands; and nearly the whole of Calabria had espoused their cause.[2] On 6th October the Venetian Governor of Monopoli gave it as 'the general opinion that the Spaniards, even though they should receive reinforcements, will be driven out of the kingdom, because their insolence has made them very unpopular, so that those who used to be their best friends are now hostile to them, for, having to choose between two evils, they choose the less'.[3] Nemours himself was full of confidence. 'All the Otranto district', he wrote,[4] 'is obedient to the King with the exception of Taranto and Gallipoli, which are girt by the sea. In the absence of the fleet, which I had sent to cruise on the coast of Calabria, I did not waste time over these places, but came on into the Bari district. Since my arrival several places have submitted to the King, including Bitonto, which surrendered at once without waiting to be besieged. I hope shortly to take Molfetta, Giovinazzo, and Bari, the last-named being a strong place; also Barletta, where Gonsalvo is in dire straits. I am now about to go there in company with M. d'Aubigny, and I shall attack it by sea as well as by land, for Prégent's galleys are with me, and I have recalled the squadron which has been cruising off the Calabrian coast. All Calabria has acknowledged our authority save for a few places on the coast. Gonsalvo is busy disseminating falsehoods, but they do him no good. He says

[1] Giustinian, *Dispacci*, vol. i, p. 103.
[2] Sanuto, *I Diarii*, vol. iv, cols. 341, 359, 370.
[3] *Ibid.*, col. 372.
[4] *Ibid.*, cols. 421–2.

that he has reinforcements coming from Germany as well as from Spain,[1] but I have agents everywhere, and they tell me that nothing is ready. Even should reinforcements come, the King's affairs are in so good a state that no harm will ensue.'

When month after month passed, and Nemours did nothing to press home his advantage, the belief in a French victory slowly weakened, and by the beginning of 1503 it was generally considered that the odds were in favour of Gonsalvo. As early as the previous August one prescient observer had deemed the omens favourable to the Spaniards, the whole Regno feeling a strong dislike for French rule, and a report being everywhere current, which seemed to be well founded, that Venice had come to an understanding with Spain.[2] In November it was learnt that Spanish reinforcements were pouring into Sicily: a Spanish fleet had reached Messina, carrying 200 men-at-arms, 2,000 foot, and 300 light horse; 200 more men-at-arms and another 200 light horse had come in soon afterwards; and then more ships had arrived with a further 10,000 men and with large quantities of grain, flour, salt meat, wine, and stores.[3] The December news indicated a complete reversal in the respective situations of the two parties: whilst the Spaniards were getting help from Sicily, the French were almost destitute; there had been skirmishes around Barletta, in which the French had usually got the worst of it; d'Alègre was ill in Foggia; the Spaniards were gaining ground in Calabria; and in the city of Naples there had been a rising against the French, because they had tried to obtain from the city a subvention of 5,000 ducats.[4] By January the Governor of Monopoli, who had formerly foretold a French victory, had seen reason to alter his opinion. 'It used to be thought', he wrote, 'that the French would win, but now the reverse is generally believed, because the Spaniards hold the chief strong places, and receive reinforcements. Ships bearing troops are passing this place on their way to Barletta, and it is expected that in the spring the Great Captain will be able to take the field.'[5]

[1] 'Sì de Alemagna come de Franza'; but 'Franza' is an obvious clerical error for 'Spagna'.

[2] Giustinian, *Dispacci*, vol. i, pp. 103–4.

[3] Sanuto, *I Diarii*, vol. iv, col. 477.

[4] *Ibid.*, cols. 561, 573, 600–1.

[5] *Ibid.*, col. 638.

Meanwhile it was becoming a question whether the prize for which the French and Spaniards were contending would be worth the winning, if it were not quickly grasped. 'The kingdom is in dissolution; business is no longer transacted; scarcity, oppression, and rapine prevail everywhere; and for two months there has been nothing but wet and stormy weather, which despite daily intercessions grows continually worse and worse.' [1]

In the desultory operations of the winter the French had scored one success, when on Christmas Day 1502 d'Aubigny had attacked and defeated at Terranuova a Spanish force which had landed at Reggio; but with that exception the course of events had everywhere been unfavourable to the armies under Nemours' command, and indicated plainly that, when the real trial of strength should begin, the inexperienced French leader would be no match for his wily and skilful opponent. In the town of Castellaneta on the road between Bari and Taranto the men of the French garrison had permitted themselves the licence which so often made French rule odious, maltreating the men, seducing the women, and pilfering the valuables. Goaded into desperation by their sufferings, the outraged citizens at length determined to end the tyranny, rose suddenly, overpowered the guard, and called in the Spaniards from Taranto. Furious at the insult to his authority, Nemours collected a large force, and hurried off to punish the rebels, careless of the danger to which his absence would expose the unprotected French posts within striking distance of Barletta. He was to learn that the Great Captain was not an enemy with whom such liberties could safely be taken. Waiting till the main French force was a day's march away, Gonsalvo left Barletta at dead of night on 22nd February with horse, foot, and guns, and moved stealthily upon Ruvo, where lay M. de la Palice with his own company and the company of the Duke of Savoy. At dawn on the 23rd he was outside Ruvo, was presently joined by his guns, and had surrounded the town before the French, who kept no watch, were aware that anything was amiss. Ruvo was a poor place, with a wretched moat and still more wretched walls, and La Palice, surprised there by a superior force, had no chance of offering a success-

[1] *Ibid.*, cols. 557–8.

ful resistance. He fought gallantly, and beat off the first two assaults, but at the third attempt the Spaniards effected an entrance, capturing La Palice, who had been wounded in the head, the lieutenant of the Duke of Savoy's company, 150 other French prisoners, about 400 cavalry horses, some sumpter mules, and a valuable booty of clothes, jewels, and money. After razing the defences of Ruvo, Gonsalvo returned unmolested to his base.

Here he received tidings of an event which could not fail to affect his fortunes in the most favourable manner. When the remnants of the French fleet had returned from the disastrous expedition to Mytilene, the captain of the galleys, Prégent de Bidoux, had taken up his station in the Adriatic; and since the outbreak of the war with Spain he had been co-operating with Nemours' forces in the investment of Barletta. He had received little encouragement and less support: reinforcements had, indeed, been ordered to join him, but were incompetently led, and failed to get past the Spanish naval forces in Sicily; but neither misfortune nor neglect could long depress his bold and adventurous spirit. Places occupied by Nemours on the Adriatic coast gave him a base; when these did not serve, he did not scruple to use the harbours of the neutral Venetians; and from October 1502 until February 1503 he had busied himself in attacking Spanish convoys and sinking his prizes. On 10th February, with his four galleys, a barque, and a captured caravel, he put into Otranto, to repair a galley and to dress a wound. He was still lying there when three days later the sails of a Spanish squadron were descried from the harbour. Prégent went to the Venetian Governor, and asked whether he could count upon being safe in his port. The Governor assured him that he was as safe in Otranto as in Marseilles, because, if the Spaniards should attempt to enter with any hostile intention, he would instantly sink them. The Governor then sent two of his officials off to the Spaniard, to tell him that a French fleet was in the harbour, and that he must on no account come in. Answering that it was open to him to attack his enemy wheresoever he might be found, the Spaniard continued to advance. The Governor again sent off and cautioned him against entering; whereupon he came ashore, went to the Governor, and in the name of the Catholic

sovereigns demanded permission to attack the French. The Governor said that he could not possibly allow it, and entered a formal protest. But his manner seems to have left upon the mind of the Spaniard the impression that nothing very terrible would occur, if the protest should be ignored; and four days later his fleet approached the harbour, broke the chain across its mouth, and sailed in. Prégent hurried to the Governor, and told him that he meant to defend himself; he counted upon help from the shore, he said, and was confident that with such help he could send the Spaniards to the bottom. The Governor replied that the French must on no account begin hostilities, for he was going to warn the Spaniards to keep off, ignoring the fact that such warnings had already been given, and that the Spaniard most clearly intended to disregard them. Meanwhile the Spaniard was nearing the French galleys. Prégent, who had lost the chance to attack, and did not mean to fight at a disadvantage, landed his guns and valuables, ran his galleys ashore, and sank his prize. Thus the Adriatic was at last made safe for Spanish merchantmen, and at Barletta the prices of all commodities fell a half on the news of Prégent's misfortune. With food from Sicily, money from Spain, reinforcements from Germany, and horses taken from the French, Gonsalvo might look forward without apprehension to the coming of campaigning weather.[1]

The incident at Otranto illustrates the difficulties besetting the Venetians by virtue of their possession of places in the theatre of war, which exposed them to the usual fate of neutrals in suffering at the hands of both belligerents and pleasing neither. Gonsalvo wrote to the Senate in bitter criticism of the Governor, maintaining the right of a belligerent to attack an enemy fleet in any harbour which it had used as a base, and complaining that the Governor's interference had saved Prégent's vessels from capture.[2] When tidings of the affair reached the French Court, the King of France was yet louder in his complaints, and the Venetian ambassador, on accompanying him to church, was rudely

[1] Sanuto, *I Diarii*, vol. iv, col. 839; C. de la Roncière, *Histoire de la marine française*, vol. iii, pp. 62–3; A. Spont, 'Les Galères royales dans la Méditerranée', *Revue des questions historiques*, vol. lviii, pp. 401–2.

[2] Sanuto, *I Diarii*, vol. iv, col. 843.

distracted from his devotions. 'I attended Mass with the King', he told the Signory, 'and he complained bitterly of our Governor at Otranto for causing his captain, Prégent, to lose his four galleys. He held forth at great length and with much passion, vowing that he would maintain the alliance only on condition that the Signory were true to it. Amid all the talking it was impossible for any one to hear a word of the service.'[1] A month later the French grievance was still unappeased, and on 19th April the Senate felt obliged to send a commissioner to Otranto, to inquire into the truth of the allegation that their Governor had caused the four galleys to be sold to the Spaniards. 'This was done', Sanuto explained, 'not because the actions of our Governor were in any way doubted, but simply to satisfy the King of France.'[2] The expedient failed of its intended effect upon the King's mind, and he remained in a mood to heap reproaches upon the representative of the Signory. 'You are not satisfied, then, with causing the loss of my galleys,' he grumbled, 'but you must also confiscate my guns. Is this what your much vaunted alliance comes to? That my galleys were, as you say, recruited by compulsion, is beside the point, for galley crews are composed of murderers and other criminals, who are given that chance to escape the death penalty. I do not propose to discuss the matter further; neither do I wish to hear it discussed in my presence.'[3]

Louis could scarcely be blamed, if he suspected the good faith of his allies, for they had long since repented of the bargain which had brought him into Italy; they resented the influence which he had acquired in the peninsula, were alarmed by the operations of his *protégé*, Cesare Borgia, in Romagna, complained of French encroachments in the Adda district, and much disliked Prégent's use of their harbours for operations which tended to embroil them with Spain and resulted in a serious interference with their own supplies. Before the equivocal episode at Otranto the King had found out that Gonsalvo in Barletta was obtaining money, supplies, and arms from Venetians, and in answer to his protest was

[1] Sanuto, *I Diarii*, vol. iv, col. 849.

[2] *Ibid.*, vol. v, col. 21.

[3] Spont, 'Les Galères royales dans la Méditerranée', *Revue des questions historiques*, vol. lviii, p. 406.

coolly told by the Signory that Venice was a free country, and it was impossible to restrict the activities of Venetian merchants. Alarmed and angry as they were, however, the Signory did not desire an open breach with the King, and in an attempt to hold the balance even between him and his enemies they had also involved themselves in recurrent difficulties with the Spaniards. The following reports from Giuliano Gradenigo, the Venetian Governor of Trani, reveal some of the difficulties of the neutral position, and tend to show that despite French and Spanish complaints Venice was in sober truth more sinned against than sinning.

In January 1503 Gradenigo wrote to the Senate, to describe the depredations of the Spaniards, who were driving off cattle and robbing all persons who ventured to go out beyond the walls of the town. 'I have written to the Great Captain', he went on, 'requesting him to see to it, and he has promised to do so. There being a great scarcity of grain, I purchased twenty-five loads in a neighbouring district occupied by the French, and a merchant went to the Great Captain to arrange for a pass, which he paid for and obtained. The grain duly reached our borders on the 19th, whereupon the Great Captain sent out a party of horse, who took the carts to Barletta, and unloaded the grain into his stores there. I wrote to complain, but have received no reply. Gonsalvo told the merchant that he had need of the grain, and would make restitution, when his own grain should come from Sicily. The French at Bisceglie, who have been short of supplies for the past three months, keep two armed vessels at sea, and these intercept the provision ships bound for Trani, so that our situation resembles that of a besieged city. I have given instructions for a galley, which is lying here, to be equipped and sent out cruising every day. The galley went out for the first time on the 16th, and has already been successful in bringing in two cargoes of food-stuffs, which were in danger of capture by French vessels.

'On the 15th the Great Captain with all his forces rode towards Canosa, to intercept the flocks and herds; he secured some 8,000 animals, and drove them to Barletta. On the 19th a small body of French horse was attacked by the Great Captain near Trani, and practically all were killed or captured. On his way back the Great Captain and all his men

marched past in squadron formation close to our walls. It was estimated that his horse numbered 1,400, of whom some 800 were well mounted and well equipped, whilst the rest were on sorry jades or on mules; and he had two companies of infantry, each 300 strong, fine men, and well appointed. On hearing of his approach I sent an armed guard to the only gate which had not been closed, had it shut and barred except for the wicket, caused all the shops to be shut, and sent the men to the walls, with orders that no one should speak a word. I myself went up into a turret, dressed in such a manner that I should not be recognized, and watched the Great Captain pass with his men. He closely inspected our walls and moats, and paid particular attention to a turret which I have lately been fortifying.' [1]

After a brief interval Gradenigo wrote again to complain that the behaviour of the Spaniards grew worse and worse every day, but that it was useless to complain to the Great Captain, because he promised to see to it, and then did nothing. 'It is rumoured that the Spaniards mean to attack Trani, so I have doubled the guards and placed a boom across the harbour. The French Viceroy and M. de la Palice, the Governor of the Abruzzi, have repeatedly cautioned me about Spanish designs; and it is a fact that the Great Captain has made many scaling-ladders, and often keeps his men under arms all night. The Great Captain does his best to give the impression of being on good terms with the Signory, proclaiming that all the French possessions in the Milanese and on the coast here really belong to Venice, and declaring that a league between Venice and Spain is about to be proclaimed. The French Viceroy sent to ask me whether I knew anything about this league, and I told him that the Signory, I felt sure, would never break faith. This annoyed the Great Captain, and he in his turn sent to me, to complain of my saying such a thing, when there is an accord between Venice and his sovereigns; he added that as a friend to Venice he was painfully surprised that I should fortify my town, increase my guard, and close my harbour. I replied that the guards were made necessary by the bad conduct of his own men, and that the harbour had been closed, not in suspicion of Spanish faith, but to keep out vessels from neighbouring

[1] Sanuto, *I Diarii*, vol. iv, cols. 728–30.

ports, where there was a plague. I took occasion to complain about the cattle his people had driven off, the trees they had cut down, the money they had stolen from a ship going to buy grain for Trani, and the twenty-five cart-loads of grain they had seized on 19th January, after he had given a pass for it. The French are behaving very well, supply us with meat and oil, and, if any cattle are stolen by their people, make reparation, and punish the offenders. The Spaniards have intercepted a caravel consigned to me with 1,000 measures of maize, and the Great Captain pays no heed to my protests, saying that the Signory will not object to acts done for the maintenance of his army. Prégent and his four galleys have captured three Spanish vessels, have driven another ashore near Taranto, and are keeping two others shut up in Gallipoli.' [1]

The tedious warfare in Naples was diversified by one or two incidents, which made a great stir at the time and are of sufficient interest to merit a passing mention. They were 'the last gleams of the light of chivalry', and show that the ideals which animated the heroes of Sir Walter Scott's *Ivanhoe* still inspired the high-spirited scions of a nobility nurtured in arms. These incidents were known as the Combat of the Eleven, the Contest between Bayard and Sotomayor, and the Combat of the Thirteen.

The Combat of the Eleven was brought about by French criticism of the Spanish *gendarmerie*. After meeting the Spaniards in several engagements near Barletta, the French men-at-arms expressed the opinion that the Spanish infantry fought with great gallantry, but that their cavalry were less courageous, since they would always wheel away to avoid the shock of the heavy French lances. Stung by the taunt, some Spanish gentlemen sent to the French to propose that their skill and courage should be put to the test in a combat between equal numbers, similarly armed. The French accepted the challenge, and chose François d'Urfé, Bayard, and nine other noted warriors to act as their champions. By common consent the Venetians, as neutrals, were asked to provide a space suitable for the contest, and lists were marked out under the walls of Trani, and were placed under the protection of French and Spanish men-at-arms. As the

[1] Sanuto, *I Diarii*, vol. iv, cols. 763–5.

day approached, the excitement of the country-side rose to fever height, and it was estimated that at least ten thousand persons mounted the walls of Trani, to witness the contest.

At ten o'clock on the morning of the appointed day the French champions entered the lists with vizors lowered and lances in rest, and shortly afterwards the combat began. Different tactics were employed by the two sides, for whilst the French aimed at the bodies of their adversaries, risking the fracture of their lances against their body-armour, the Spaniards tried to kill the French horses and to preserve their lances intact. At the first shock three Spaniards were dismounted, and four French horses were killed, two of their riders rising to fight with their swords on foot, while one was put out of action with a broken arm, and the fourth, pinned under the body of his charger, was obliged to surrender. In the second charge more French horses were accounted for, and presently d'Urfé and Bayard alone remained on horseback, to cover as best they could their surviving comrades, whose horses were dead, and whose lances were broken. At the next Spanish charge d'Urfé dodged, seized the lance of an oncoming opponent, wrested it from his grasp, and handed it to one of his own side. A few moments later he seized another, and at the next shock Bayard followed his example. Two Spaniards being *hors de combat*, there were now nine combatants on each side, but of the nine Spaniards seven were still mounted, whilst of the nine Frenchmen all but d'Urfé and Bayard had been unhorsed. In the next charge Bayard secured another lance, and one of the dismounted Frenchmen, striking at a passing opponent, hit him on the arm, and knocked the lance from his hand. Of the nine Spanish lances which had survived the first shock, seven had now passed into the hands of the French. D'Urfé and Bayard then proposed either that the combat should be continued between themselves and the two Spaniards who still had lances, or that all should dismount and fight the battle out with swords. The Spaniards, however, were of opinion that enough had been done for honour, and suggested that the contest should be regarded as a draw, to which the French agreed. As the combatants withdrew, the spectators hurried into the lists, to collect the fragments of broken

lances, which they would treasure as mementoes of the stirring scenes which they had beheld.[1]

The world was to hear more of the cavalier, who had divided with d'Urfé the honours of the day. Pierre Terrail, Seigneur de Bayard, was a native of Dauphiné, where his father was the head of an ancient but impoverished noble house. Whilst yet a child, he had been placed by his uncle, the Bishop of Grenoble, in the Court of the Duke of Savoy, and was still a mere boy, when the Duke transferred him to the Court of Charles VIII. Immediately attracting attention by his courage and skill in the saddle, he was selected to serve his apprenticeship to arms under Louis d'Ars in the company of the Count of Ligny, and at the age of twenty-one he had fleshed his sword at Fornovo, where he had two horses killed under him, and captured an Italian standard. After the second conquest of Naples Ligny's company was sent to occupy the places which belonged to the Count by reason of his marriage with the Duchess of Altamura, and Bayard was chosen by Louis d'Ars to command in Minervino, a small stronghold in the neighbourhood of Bari. Going out one day from Minervino to make a reconnaissance at the head of thirty men, he encountered a body of forty Spanish men-at-arms from Andria, led by Alonso de Sotomayor, a relative of Gonsalvo. Charging furiously, he routed the Spaniards, and captured their leader, whom he took to Minervino, to await the payment of his ransom. Placed on parole, and allowed his liberty, Sotomayor corrupted an Albanian cavalryman, got possession of his horse, and tried to escape. Pursued and recaptured, he was brought back to Minervino, and was then deprived of the privileges which he had before enjoyed and abused. In course of time he got the money for his ransom, which Bayard distributed among his men, and he then returned to Andria, where he complained that he had not received from Bayard the treatment which one gentleman had the right to expect from another. The words were overheard by a French prisoner, who, when he presently regained his liberty, repeated them to Bayard.

[1] Jean d'Auton, *Chroniques de Louis XII*, ed. R. de Maulde, vol. iii, pp. 112–21; N. Faraglia, 'Ettore e la casa Fieramosca,' in *Archivio Storico per le Province Napoletane*, vol. ii, pp. 663–4; Lavisse, *Histoire de France*, vol. v, part i, p. 61.

Bayard instantly wrote to demand that Sotomayor should withdraw them and apologize, or meet him in single combat.

Sotomayor replied that he must decline to apologize, but was ready to fight. He added that he presumed Bayard would not demur to being regarded as the challenger, and was told in reply that in a just quarrel it was a matter of indifference to Bayard whether he gave the challenge or accepted it. It was no matter of indifference to Sotomayor, for the laws of chivalry gave to the challenged the choice of weapons, and, as he well knew, Bayard was a horseman of unusual skill, who, moreover, by reason of a recent fever would be at an additional disadvantage, if compelled to fight on foot. Having secured the right to decide the mode of combat, Sotomayor elected to fight on foot with rapiers and daggers, and his stipulation that the vizors of the helmets should not be lowered indicated that the duel was to be a combat *à outrance*. The encounter took place on 1st February 1503, and produced a long and fierce struggle between the powerful Spaniard and his lighter but more agile antagonist. Weakened by fever, however, Bayard tired the quicker, and things were looking black for him, when he saw a chance to pierce his enemy's defence, and struck him in the throat through a joint of his gorget. Maddened by his wound, Sotomayor rushed in upon Bayard, and seized him in his arms. In the act of falling Bayard dealt a blow with his poniard, and the blade, striking Sotomayor's eye, entered his brain. Turning to the heralds to request that no trumpets should be sounded in honour of his triumph, the victor prostrated himself upon the ground, to offer his humble thanks to the Giver of victories.[1]

Thirteen Italians of the Colonna bands were the heroes of the last of these three feats of knightly prowess. After one of the skirmishes near Barletta, in which Nemours' cavalry had suffered a reverse, Gonsalvo gave a banquet in honour of his victorious officers and of their French prisoners. The talk naturally turned upon the incidents of the recent battle, and

[1] *La très joyeuse . . . histoire du gentil Seigneur de Bayart*, by the 'Loyal Serviteur', ed. J. Roman, pp. 1–58, 90–110; Jean d'Auton, *Chroniques de Louis XII*, ed. R. de Maulde, vol. iii, pp. 121–7; Faraglia's article on Ettore Fieramosca in the *Archivio Storico per le Province Napoletane*, vol. ii, pp. 665–6; Lavisse, *Histoire de France*, vol. v, part i, pp. 61–2.

a Spanish captain, Diego de Mendoza, who had led the sortie, gave it as his opinion that in view of the conspicuous services rendered by the men-at-arms of the Colonna bands the honours on that occasion had been with the Italian troops. A Frenchman in his cups, Charles de la Motte, took him up, declaring that, whilst willing to concede the possession of soldierly qualities by the Spaniards, he could not submit to be compared with the Italians, whom the French had defeated over and over again in every part of the country. On rising from the table, another Spaniard, Inigo Lopez de Ayala, took La Motte aside, and asked him whether he was aware that a French officer, after accusing the Italians of bad faith, had been challenged to a duel by a noted Italian fighter, Ettore Fieramosca, but had failed to take up the defiance. La Motte replied that he had not heard the tale, implying that he did not believe it, and he then resumed his abuse of the Italians. Inigo told him that he would undertake to find a band of ten Italians prepared to defend their honour, and reported the affair to Prospero Colonna, who formally demanded that La Motte should withdraw his words, or substantiate them in the lists.

La Motte was ransomed, and returned to Ruvo. Thence he sent a trumpet to Barletta, to announce that twelve French cavaliers desired the privilege of meeting twelve Italians in battle, and that he himself wished to be added to the number. He suggested that each combatant should carry one hundred golden crowns on his person, the sum to be forfeited by the loser, together with his horse and his arms. The challenge was received with exultation by Colonna's men-at-arms, and in both armies the forthcoming trial of skill was awaited with feverish excitement. The task of selecting the Italian team was entrusted to Colonna, and loud were the laments of the disappointed, when the great *condottiere* completed his delicate task, and announced the names of the champions who would defend the honour of Italy. At the head of his list stood the name of Ettore Fieramosca, the hero of Inigo's tale, who had inflicted on the French one of the few reverses they had suffered during their advance on Naples, had then followed his sovereign into exile, and had lately come back to the Regno, to place his sword at the service of the Colonnas. The other team was to be led by the

braggart Frenchman, whose insolence had provoked the encounter. It was arranged that the contest should take place on Monday, 13th February 1503, in the lists near Trani, in which Bayard and Sotomayor had fought their duel.

To ensure that they should not suffer by any defect in their equipment, the two Colonna chiefs personally supervised the arming of the Italian champions. Special lances were chosen of great strength and exceptional length. Each man was given two swords, one short and broad, to be worn on the thigh, the other long and pointed, to be carried at the saddle-bow. From the other side of the saddle-bow was suspended a heavy axe with a handle half an ell long. The horses, in part protected by frontlets and plate mail, were caparisoned in trappings of leather, coloured and gilt.

By Sunday, 12th February, the champions were armed, hostages had been exchanged, and stewards of the lists had been nominated. At dawn on the following morning the Italians went to church, accompanied by the Colonnas and other friends, heard Mass, and solemnly vowed to obey the orders of their leader, to afford mutual succour, and to die sooner than surrender. After breakfasting with Prospero, they marched in solemn procession to the field, their horses led by infantry captains and their accoutrements carried by squires. On reaching the lists, they dismounted, to offer up a final prayer, then remounted, donned their helmets, and set their lances in rest. The French could then be descried: they, too, marched in procession, and were dressed in crimson jerkins embroidered with gold. Upon reaching the lists, they halted, as the Italians had done, to dismount and offer up a petition for victory, then embraced each other, and got back into the saddle. Fieramosca approached, saluted, and invited them to take precedence in entering the lists. It was no empty compliment, for a high southerly wind blew that day, and the Italians, in giving up the choice of position, would be left at a disadvantage in respect of sun, wind, and dust.

It was now about midday; all was ready; and the trumpets were about to sound the signal for combat. From opposite ends of the lists the combatants began to advance, but the pace was slow, and, although they spurred forward as they neared each other, the charge lacked impetus, and led to nothing but the splintering of a few lances. The prelude was

tame, but the real battle began, when the lance was discarded for the sword, the axe, and the mace, and then the fighting was fierce and long. In the first *mêlée* the French gave way before the impetuosity of the Italian attack, and were pressed back to the confines of the lists before they could recover themselves and stand their ground. In this *mêlée* three Frenchmen were unhorsed, and the steed of one Italian was brought to the ground. As it fell, its rider threw himself from the saddle, and, seizing a lance, began to thrust vigorously at the French riders and their horses. In a few minutes he had killed one opponent and driven another from the field. Meanwhile his companions were also prospering, and of the other Frenchmen some were wounded, some thrown, and two driven from the lists. Their leader, La Motte, had been unhorsed, but was fighting gamely on his feet, when Fieramosca engaged him, and pressed him back till he, too, was out of the combat. There was no chance then for the survivors of his band, for there were but four of them, and of these four one had been unhorsed. Scorning the thought of surrender, they fought on with grim determination, but the odds against them were overwhelming, and gradually they, too, were vanquished or driven from the lists. So sure had they been of victory that not a man among them had troubled to provide himself with the hundred crowns which upon the proposal of their own leader were to be forfeit on defeat, and the laws of chivalry demanded that they should yield themselves prisoners in default of ransom. So ended a contest, the fame of which reached to the ends of Europe, and yet endures among the records of chivalry. In Barletta that night the streets were illuminated, the bells were pealed, the guns were fired, and men rejoiced with a mighty joy, for in the blood of her fallen enemies and in the shame of such as lived the honour of Italy was at length avenged.[1]

While the armies were thus occupied around Barletta, a

[1] There are numerous contemporary references to this famous contest: see, for example, Giovio, *Vita di Consalvo di Cordova*, trans. L. Domenichi, pp. 136–44; Jean d'Auton, *Chroniques de Louis XII*, ed. R. de Maulde, vol. iii, pp. 127–33; Guicciardini, *Storia d' Italia*, ed. Gherardi, vol. ii, pp. 58–60; Sanuto, *I Diarii*, vol. iv, col. 777; G. Passero, *Giornali*, ed. Altobelli, pp. 131–5. My own account is based in the main upon Faraglia's article, 'Ettore e la casa Fieramosca,' in the *Archivio Storico per le Province Napoletane*, vol. ii, pp. 659–63, 666–75.

sustained attempt was being made to patch up the quarrel which had set them at variance. Rather more than a year before, the Archduke Philip had gone on a visit to Spain, where he hoped one day to obtain the succession to Castile in right of his wife, Joanna, the daughter of Ferdinand and Isabella. He had travelled through France, and had been welcomed with flattering cordiality at the Court of Louis XII. A year later, when about to leave Spain on his return to the Low Countries, he announced his intention of travelling once more through France, ignored the protests of the Catholic sovereigns, who represented to him the impropriety of traversing the dominions of a monarch with whom they were at war, and in December 1502 left Madrid for France. He was actuated in his resolve, not only by pleasant memories of Louis' hospitality, but also by the hope that he might be able to negotiate a settlement of the Neapolitan dispute. Ferdinand, who distrusted his judgement, but could not control his actions, sent with him an experienced diplomatic agent of his own, and hoped that the cunning of the minister might neutralize the indiscretion of the Prince. The pair reached Lyons, where the French Court was established, and there Philip speedily came back under the spell of Louis' *bonhomie*. On 5th April 1503, despite express instructions to the contrary, he signed a treaty, which purported to bind the Catholic sovereigns. The compact confirmed an existing treaty for the marriage of Philip's infant son, Charles of Luxemburg, with Louis' infant daughter, Claude, and incorporated new conditions, designed to remove the Neapolitan difficulty. Charles and Claude were to assume the titles of King and Queen of Naples and Duke and Duchess of Calabria; pending consummation of the marriage the French portion of the kingdom was to be administered by a person nominated by Louis XII, and the Spanish portion by Philip or some other nominee of Ferdinand, the disputed territories being divided between the two portions; in the event of the marriage not taking place, the original partition treaty was to be carried out, with a reference of all disputes to arbitration; and in the meantime there was to be an immediate cessation of hostilities, with a general amnesty for all who had taken part in the war.[1]

[1] Dumont, *Corps universel diplomatique*, vol. iv, part i, pp. 27–8; Prescott, *History of the Reign of Ferdinand and Isabella*, pp 528–33.

It would have been prudent in Louis to obtain Ferdinand's ratification of this treaty before taking any of the steps which its signature might appear to justify. But in the atmosphere of amiability which prevailed at the French Court there were no misgivings nor any disposition to take so much as an obvious precaution. Lyons was given over to rejoicings in honour of the peace, of which such bright accounts were sent to foreign Courts that in Venice the representatives of France and Spain, who had not been on speaking terms, shook hands in public; the embarkation of fresh troops for Naples was countermanded; and orders were sent to Nemours for the cessation of hostilities. Similar instructions were sent by the Archduke to Gonsalvo, and the value of the treaty began to be understood, when that commander refused to pay the smallest attention to them, 'declaring that he knew no authority but that of his own sovereigns, and that he felt bound to prosecute the war with all his ability, till he received their commands to the contrary.'[1] Those commands were not likely to be forthcoming, when Ferdinand knew well how great had been the success of his general's Fabian tactics, and how completely the superiority once enjoyed by his enemies had now shifted to his own side. Reinforced, revictualled, re-equipped, and heartened by the numerous small successes of the winter campaign, Gonsalvo's armies were ready to take the offensive against an enemy who had been growing steadily weaker and poorer, and whom the imprudence of the King had suddenly deprived of the last hope of much needed support.

The changed conditions made themselves felt first in Calabria, where d'Aubigny's position had seemed to be unassailable after his victory at Terranuova on Christmas Day. In the beginning of April fresh Spanish reinforcements, consisting of 300 men-at-arms, 400 light horse, and 4,000 foot, crossed from Sicily under the command of Don Fernando de Andrada, landed at Reggio, and occupied Terranuova. Informed by his spies, d'Aubigny called up reinforcements of men-at-arms, advanced against Terranuova, and on Friday, 21st April, found himself in contact with the enemy near Seminara, where he had won two victories in bygone days. Though inferior in numbers, he resolved to attack, and made

[1] Prescott, *op. cit.*, p. 533.

his dispositions for battle. Posting his infantry to oppose the Spanish foot, he divided his men-at-arms into three bodies; one he would lead himself; one was to be commanded by the Seigneur d'Humbercourt; and the third was entrusted to an Angevin noble, a member of the House of San Severino and a brother of the Prince of Bisignano. When all was ready, Humbercourt was launched against the enemy, and charged them with an impetuous fury that tore a hole in their ranks. More men-at-arms were then sent forward under the general's nephew, Jean Stuart, to press home the attack which Humbercourt had opened; and had they carried out d'Aubigny's design, they might have completed the discomfiture of the Spanish cavalry, and decided the issue of the day. Instead of charging the enemy horse, however, Stuart bore down on their foot, whom he saw advancing to the aid of the cavalry, and by so doing left Humbercourt's men, already disordered by their first charge, to bear the brunt of an attack by the rest of the Spanish cavalry, which had not yet been engaged. The blunder was fatal to the French. Humbercourt was speedily overwhelmed; his assailants, flushed with success, threw themselves upon Stuart, who was engaged with the foot; and Stuart's squadron was broken with heavy loss. The rear-guard under San Severino had already taken to its heels, and the infantry, whom its flight threw into confusion, fell an easy prey to the Spanish *genétaires*. Part of the French army endeavoured to retire upon Gioja, but was pursued and compelled to surrender. The rest drew off under d'Aubigny to Rocca d'Angitola, and were there besieged. It was with difficulty that the gallant French leader had been prevailed upon to leave the field; after vain endeavours to rally his men he had tried to ride alone against the victorious enemy, declaring that it was better to die in combat at the hands of the foe than to escape as a fugitive in the company of friends.[1]

Seven days later the French cause suffered another and a

[1] Jean d'Auton, *Chroniques de Louis XII*, ed. R. de Maulde, vol. iii, pp. 158–66. Machiavelli ('Dell' arte della guerra,' *Opere*, vol. iv, p. 237) said that 'the Swiss attacked, and with their short pikes cut their way into the Spanish foot; but the Spaniards, helped by their spiked shields and by their physical agility, threw themselves among the Swiss to such good purpose that they succeeded in reaching them with their swords, with the result that nearly all the Swiss were killed'.

far more serious reverse. Gonsalvo at the head of armies in fighting trim, but still straitened for supplies, had made up his mind that the time had come when he might venture out from Barletta, and seek a decision on the stricken field. His intention was to march against a small French post called Cerignola, some twenty miles away, which must speedily succumb, unless Nemours should hasten from Canosa to its rescue. On the morning of 28th April the whole Spanish army came out from Barletta, and turned their backs upon the ramparts which had sheltered them during so many weary months. 'The road lay across the field of Cannae, where, seventeen centuries before, the pride of Rome had been humbled by the victorious arms of Hannibal, in a battle which, though fought with far greater numbers, was not so decisive in its consequences as that which the same scenes were to witness in a few hours'.[1] The long march became a torture to Gonsalvo's soldiers. It was the end of April, and the power of the noonday sun was already considerable in that latitude. With his habitual prudence the commander had given orders that, as the army crossed the Ofanto, each man should provide himself with sufficient water for the march; but the precaution was neglected, and the sufferings of the troops were extreme, as they staggered through the shimmering heat along the parched and dusty road. By midday the infantry were exhausted, and men in armour, oppressed by the weight of metal, began to drop. Gonsalvo rode through the ranks with words of encouragement, and did what he could to mitigate the sufferings of his men, eventually commanding that each mounted man should take up a foot-soldier behind him, and himself setting the example by mounting a German standard-bearer on his crupper.

The little town of Cerignola stands on the summit of a small eminence, which in 1503 was covered with vineyards and encircled at the foot by a ditch. The Spanish army reached the place early in the afternoon, and proceeded to encamp. Much as they had suffered on the march, they were not yet permitted to rest, for there was news that the French were approaching, and Gonsalvo would not trust to the natural advantages of a site, when art might enhance them. The main defensive feature of his position was the ditch, and

[1] Prescott, *History of the Reign of Ferdinand and Isabella*, p. 534.

as this ditch, though fairly deep, was not wide, his thirsty and weary men were set to the task of making it broader. With the soil displaced in the operation a small rampart was thrown up on the inner side, and as a further precaution sharpened stakes were driven into the bottom of the ditch. The work was still in progress, when the French were seen approaching, at sight of whom Gonsalvo was obliged to stop work on the entrenchment and set his men in order of battle. His guns, thirteen in number, he mounted on the little rampart above the ditch. Behind the rampart he placed his infantry, the Germans with their long pikes in the centre, and the Spaniards in two bodies on either wing. Between each division a space was left to give passage to the cavalry, which was held in reserve.

The French halted at a respectful distance, and held a council of war, to consider what action should be taken. Nemours and Louis d'Ars proposed that, as sunset was at hand, the attack upon the Spanish position should be postponed until the morrow; and they were strongly supported by François d'Urfé and Gaspard de Coligny, who had been quartered in Cerignola, were familiar with the ground, and were aware that the position which the Spaniards occupied was naturally so strong that it was habitually used by the peasants as a place of refuge in times of disturbance. Yves d'Alègre, to whom they appealed to confirm their opinion, agreed that the position was certainly strong, but dissented from the conclusion that the attack upon it ought to be deferred; there was no water within five miles, he said; if the horses were left unwatered all night, they would be unfit for action in the morning; and it was more dangerous to spend the hours of darkness within striking distance of the enemy than to go forward in one of those headlong attacks in which French troops were invariably successful. In this view he was supported warmly by the Seigneur de Chandieu, the leader of the Swiss, who told the council that he had been commissioned by his men to declare that, if the French should neglect an opportunity for immediate battle with the enemy, Swiss troops would never again go campaigning in the service of the King of France. Unmoved by this menace, Louis d'Ars and those who thought with him adhered to the opinion which they had already expressed, that the place

and the hour were unsuitable for an attack. The enemy, they said, had in their favour three conditions, which usually decide battles; they were rested, in battle order, and in a position of their own choice; and delay would be at least as disadvantageous to them as to their assailants, for they were without water and food, and had already endured great fatigue on empty stomachs. As the discussion proceeded, high words passed between Louis d'Ars and d'Alègre, who so far forgot himself as to reflect upon the general himself, hinting that, if Nemours favoured delay, it must be because he feared to find himself in action. The taunt went home, and Nemours, furious at being suspected of cowardice, closed the discussion with an intimation that he would attack at once.

The two armies were of approximately equal strength, each consisting of about seven thousand men, the French with the better cavalry, and the Spaniards with the better foot. The French advanced to the attack in three divisions, arranged in echelon; first, the heavy cavalry under Nemours and Louis d'Ars on the right; then in the centre, and slightly to the rear, the whole body of foot; and on the left, and slightly behind once again, the light cavalry under Yves d'Alègre. It was put to Nemours that as the representative of the sovereign he ought not to expose himself in a position of danger; but with d'Alègre's sneer rankling in his mind he answered that his zeal in the King's service knew no fear of death, and that he was fully resolved to lead the first charge. As his cavalry rode forward, the Spanish guns opened fire, inflicting some damage, and the advance was also impeded by Gonsalvo's light horse, which had been sent out against them under Diego de Mendoza and Fabrizio Colonna. They were troubled, too, by the smoke from Gonsalvo's guns, which mingled with the dust raised by the hoofs of their horses; and presently some Spanish powder wagons blew up, emitting dense clouds of smoke, which completely obscured their vision. Blundering forward, they found themselves confronted by the impassable ditch, where they were at the mercy of the Spanish arquebusiers and of the German infantry with their long pikes. Nemours himself was shot down, as he rode along the ditch in search of a passage. Louis d'Ars was wounded, and his horse was killed under him. The Swiss reached the scene, and made heroic efforts

to penetrate the enemy's defences, but they could make no better progress than their mounted comrades, and presently their leader, Chandieu, was shot and fell. All was already confusion in the French ranks, when Gonsalvo ordered the general charge, and hurled his entire force against his disordered assailants. The French broke and fled with scarcely an attempt at resistance. Aided by the darkness, for the sun had now set, Louis d'Ars escaped with the remnants of the *gendarmerie* to Venosa, and Yves d'Alègre, whose division had not been engaged, galloped off with 400 mounted men to Melfi. The Swiss and Gascon infantry were less fortunate, for they could not escape from the Spanish horse, and nearly all of them perished. It was estimated that in an engagement of about one hour's duration the French loss amounted to more than one half of the force engaged, and in addition their guns, their colours, their baggage, and their stores fell a spoil to the victors. The Spanish loss was inconsiderable, for the battle had been not so much a contest as a massacre. The victory, said Fabrizio Colonna, was due, not to the valour of the troops or to the skill of the captains, but to the existence of a little earth-work and a shallow trench.[1]

Next day Gonsalvo dispatched his cavalry in pursuit of the fugitive French horse. They were too late to catch Louis d'Ars, who was already safe in Venosa. Yves d'Alègre, who had halted at Melfi, fled on by Aversa to Capua, when he found himself pursued, and hearing there of disturbances at Naples, continued his flight, and did not again draw rein till he found himself behind the walls of Gaeta. Meanwhile Gonsalvo was garnering the fruits of victory. Cerignola and Canosa submitted at once. Aversa and Capua raised the Spanish flag, when the Spanish cavalry appeared before their gates. Naples itself sent to Gonsalvo, to tender its submission, as soon as it heard of his success, and on 14th May he entered the capital in state. But though the town was his, the great fortresses were still in the hands of the French. The task of reducing them was entrusted to Pedro Navarro, whose ability as an engineer was well known. After reducing

[1] Jean d'Auton, *Chroniques de Louis XII*, ed. R. de Maulde, vol. iii, pp. 166–78; Giovio, *Vita di Consalvo di Cordova*, trans. Domenichi, pp. 163–72; Sanuto, *I Diarii*, vol. v, cols. 32–3; Prescott, *History of the Reign of Ferdinand and Isabella*, pp. 534–7.

a small work near by, Pedro Navarro ran a mine under the outer wall of the Castel Nuovo, and the Spaniards, dashing in when the mine was sprung, captured the castle after a sharp struggle.

Next day a French fleet under the Marquis of Saluzzo sailed in from Genoa with reinforcements and supplies. Two days later, on 17th June, the Marquis attacked the Spanish admiral in the Bay of Naples, drove him to Ischia, and shut him up in the harbour there under the guns of the land forts. Prégent de Bidoux, who had escaped overland from Otranto after the loss of his galleys, and had been attached to the Marquis of Saluzzo's fleet, proposed that fire-ships should be launched against the Spanish vessels; but the proposal was rejected by the Marquis, who was loath to destroy a fleet which he hoped to capture, and preferred to await the arrival of reinforcements. But these were not immediately available, and it was found that with the Castel Nuovo lost and the Castel dell' Uovo on the eve of surrender the fleet could not maintain the blockade of Ischia. It fell back upon Gaeta, and the Castel dell' Uovo surrendered. In recording the rapid reduction of the great Neapolitan fortresses by the use of mines, Guicciardini took occasion to enunciate a truth which the world would do well to remember, since it is calculated to allay the apprehensions to which every age is prone in the presence of novel engines of war. Pedro Navarro's capture of the castles, he remarked, 'greatly increased his reputation, and caused no small alarm among mankind at large, for it was supposed that no walls or fortifications could any longer withstand his mines; but new offensive processes always cause the greater alarm, because the appropriate means of defence have not yet been thought out.' [1]

Everything now depended upon Gaeta, which Gonsalvo had gone in person to besiege, for with the exception of Venosa, where Louis d'Ars had established himself, and of a few castles in the occupation of Angevin lords the whole of the kingdom was lost to the French. D'Aubigny had surrendered, when he heard of the disaster at Cerignola, which

[1] 'Come sono più spaventevoli i modi nuovi dell' offese perchè non sono ancora escogitati i modi delle difese': Guicciardini, *Storia d' Italia*, ed. A. Gherardi, vol. ii, p. 75.

deprived him of the hope of succour, and Prospero Colonna, invading the Abruzzi, had quickly reduced Aquila, Rocca d'Evandro, and other places held by the French. Yves d'Alègre had with him in Gaeta some 300 men-at-arms and 2,000 infantry; he was well supplied with guns; and the town was amply provisioned. Gonsalvo opened his attack by assaulting an eminence called the Monte d'Orlando, which the French had fortified; but after being twice repulsed, he desisted, and confined his operations to an incessant bombardment of the walls. His own position was uneasy, however, for he was short of money and supplies, and it became untenable, when the French fleet appeared, and Prégent, leading his galleys inshore, began in his turn to bombard the Spanish camp. Gonsalvo drew off, and with his retirement the immediate danger to Gaeta passed away.

Louis was furiously angry, when he heard what had happened in Naples and realized that, if he wanted his share of the Regno, he must begin the conquest over again. He heaped reproaches on Philip, whose chief fault had been an excess of zeal; and in any case reproaches could not efface the consequences of his own imprudence. To achieve that result there was but one way: at the point of the sword Ferdinand and his general must be made to disgorge their perfidious gains. So the Bailli of Dijon was dispatched to the Alps in quest of the indispensable Swiss; La Trémoille was summoned from his rustic seclusion, once more to serve his sovereign as none could serve him but he who 'by common consent was the first soldier in France'; and an expeditionary force was got ready for Italy, which with the remnants of the former army would bring the French forces in Naples to a total of 1,800 lances and 10,000 foot. To distract Ferdinand from the defence of Naples, a triple attack was planned against Spain itself: one army under d'Albret was to make for Fontarabia; another under Marshal de Rieux was to invade Roussillon; and a fleet from Marseilles was to harry the Spanish coast. That war should be planned on so costly a scale gave the measure of the thrifty King's vexation. Despairingly reckoning up the standing charges, his Treasurers found that they would work out at more than two million ducats a year, and money had to be taken where it

[1] Guicciardini, *op. cit.*, p. 80.

could be got. The city of Paris was asked for a contribution of 40,000 *l.t.*, and rather grudgingly consented to provide 30,000 *l.t.*, after an offer of 20,000 *l.t.* had been refused. Feudal lords and financial magnates showed a more generous spirit, and from the pockets of two of them alone, Marshal de Gié and Jacques de Beaune, the King drew benevolences exceeding the amount for which he had appealed in vain to the niggardly *bourgeoisie* of his capital.

The outcome of the lavish expenditure was disappointing, particularly upon the Spanish frontier, against which the chief effort was directed. The fleet from Marseilles was driven back to port before it had burned a Spanish cottage or scuttled a Spanish fishing-smack. The army for Fontarabia dispersed without having sighted an enemy outpost, a victim of the inhospitable regions where no army could survive, if handled as this army was handled by the incompetence or treachery of d'Albret. Stronger in numbers, for it consisted of 20,000 men, and far more skilfully led, for it was under Rieux, the faithful Breton veteran, the army for Roussillon experienced a fatal check at the outset of its operations. Its progress was barred by the old castle at Salces, which Pedro Navarro had lately re-fortified, and into which Ferdinand had thrown a thousand picked men. The French reached Salces on 16th September, and, taking up a strong position between a lake and a hill, began the bombardment of the fortress. The bombardment, though continuous, produced small effect, and the besiegers were soon it difficulties. Six thousand men under the Duke of Alva had been sent forward by Ferdinand, to cut off their supplies; dearth and plague invaded their camp; repeated attacks by Spanish light horse kept them in a state of incessant alarm; and the guns of Salces, replying to their fire, claimed many victims, including the Captain of the Swiss, who was Rieux's second in command. In the meantime Ferdinand was hastily collecting a force, with which to relieve his beleaguered garrison, and by the middle of October he was ready to move forward at the head of forty or fifty thousand men, to join hands with Alva at Perpignan. He reached Perpignan on 19th October, and Rieux understood, not only that his chances of capturing Salces were destroyed, but also that he might himself be entrapped, unless he were to withdraw without loss of time.

On the night of the 20th he broke up his camp and began the retreat to Narbonne, closely pursued by Ferdinand's forces. The third and last of Louis' elaborate measures for holding Ferdinand in check had thus ended in defeat, and Louis in disgust agreed to a suspension of hostilities for a period of five months, afterwards extended to three years. Italy was excluded from this truce, and thus the sole result of the costly endeavour to occupy Ferdinand at home was to relieve him of all apprehension in that quarter and leave him at liberty to devote his resources to the defence of his Italian possessions.

Meanwhile La Trémoille's army had left for Italy, where its progress was arrested by an unlooked-for event. The clouds were gathering fast on the political horizon of the peninsula, when La Trémoille crossed the mountains, for the greed and insolence of the Pope and his son were passing all bounds, and even Georges d'Amboise, who favoured them, was goaded into complaining to the Venetian ambassador that Cesare seemed to be possessed of a devil. On the occasion of his recent visit Louis had promised to assist Cesare in recovering Bologna for the Church and in punishing the Baglioni and the Vitelli, who had incurred his displeasure. Aware of the danger which would menace them, when Cesare should receive help from the French, the captains met in secret conference, to plan measures for their own safety and for the protection of Bentivoglio in Bologna. Had they acted promptly, Cesare could scarcely have escaped, but they allowed the favourable moment to slip by, and presently the French lances arrived. Cesare amused the conspirators with deceptive negotiations, until he was ready to strike, and then invited them to meet him at Sinigaglia, where he arrested them, and put them to death. Sending word to his father to profit by the opportunity and pounce upon the Orsini, he himself occupied Città di Castello and Perugia, and advanced towards Siena, demanding that Pandolfo Petrucci should leave the city. Petrucci was ready to comply, but the Sienese refused to submit to Cesare's rule, and the French called him off. He therefore went back to Rome, to pursue the quarrel with the Orsini, which the Pope had begun with the arrest of the aged Cardinal Orsini, who had since died in prison. With an audacious disregard of Louis' feelings

Cesare opened his vendetta with an attack upon Gian Giordano Orsini, who was under the protection of the French, and had been helping them in Naples. Louis sent peremptory orders that Gian Giordano should be left alone, and gave the Pope and his son to understand that there were limits to his patience. The Borgias intimated in reply that, if the King of France were to become exacting, he might find that the Vatican had joined the Spaniards, and that the road to Naples was closed.

Such was the posture of affairs in the late summer of 1503. In that year the month of August opened in Rome with torrid days and deadly miasmic nights. On 12th August the Pope and his son rode out beyond the walls, to attend an *al fresco* supper party. The Pope went home complaining of indisposition, and next morning he was prostrate with a high fever and violent vomitings. Rome jumped to the conclusion that he had been poisoned, and it was alleged afterwards that he and Cesare had designed to remove a rich Cardinal, who was present at the party, but that by a servant's blunder the poisoned cup was placed in their own hands. The story is no longer believed: the prevalence of deadly fevers in Rome at that season of the year provides an adequate explanation of the Pope's illness; and it is significant that several guests besides Cesare were taken ill. Alexander VI, who was no longer a young man, was the most seriously affected, and his condition soon left no doubt that his life was in danger. For five days his splendid constitution resisted the ravages of the fever, but on the morning of the sixth day it was deemed advisable to administer the last sacrament, and by the evening of that day he was dead. Grisly tales reached Sanuto about the horrible aspect of the Pope in death and about the unseemly contempt with which his remains were laid out for burial. This much at least was certain, that Christendom would be none the poorer, when such a Spiritual Head should have been consigned to an unhonoured grave.

'I have heard an amusing story,' said the Doge a few weeks later, when the French ambassador had been received in audience and had disposed of his business. 'On the day the Pope fell ill, he put his Papal ring down near a window, forgot it, and went out. One of his people was sent to fetch

it, and found that it had been picked up by an urchin, who refused to part with it, unless he could give it back into the Pope's own hands. The Pope was much astonished, but went to get it. Thereupon the urchin handed him the ring, telling him that he would not keep it much longer, because his days were numbered. The Pope returned to his room in a great fright, and at that moment a monkey scuttled across the room, and ran out by the door. One of the Cardinals ran after it, and grabbed it, and would have given it to the Pope; but the Pope shouted out: "Let it go! Let it go! It is the Devil"; and that night he went down with the illness that carried him off.' 'The story finished', adds Sanuto, 'there was general laughter, everybody agreeing that it was most certainly at the bidding of the Devil that the Pope had been called away, and expressing their conviction that some day Cesare with his accursed wickednesses would receive a similar summons.' [1]

The death of Alexander VI opened to Georges d'Amboise the prospect of winning the Triple Crown, which it had been the ambition of his life to secure; and his affectionate master hurried him off to Italy, where he prepared to exert all his influence to further his candidature. The campaign was watched with interest by Giustinian, the representative of the Signory at the Papal Court. 'The representative of the King of France', he wrote, 'has received an autograph instruction from his master to exhort all the Cardinals to consult his pleasure and make the Cardinal of Rouen Pope. Every possible blandishment, promise, and inducement is employed, together with implied threats against those who may ignore the request. The message has been communicated to each Cardinal individually, and all of them are in such a state of alarm that they scarcely know whether they are on their heads or their heels. The Cardinal of Naples has spoken to me in the gravest tones about the harm which would befall the Church of God, if the King's hope should be realized; . . . and Cardinal Adrian has assured me that he would rather die than suffer such a thing to come about, because he has not been the Pope's Secretary for all these years without finding out what sort of people the French really are. The Cardinals mean to hurry on the election

[1] Sanuto, *I Diarii*, vol. v, col. 183.

without waiting for the French Cardinals to come and disturb the Conclave, but I fear lest the French ambassadors should compel them to wait by threatening to call in their own and Cesare's troops, whom the poor Cardinals would be powerless to resist. Venice ought to make it plain that a canonically elected Pope will have the protection of the Powers.' [1]

'Before going to the Pope's funeral to-day', Giustinian wrote again two days later, on 5th September, 'I called upon Cardinal della Rovere, who reached Rome yesterday. He is angry with the King of France, for he says that in days gone by the King promised to further his election, and ought not now to favour another candidate. "I am here", he added, "to look after my own interests, and not those of any one else, and I do not mean to give my vote to the Cardinal of Rouen, unless I find that he has so many votes that he can secure his election without having mine; and this, I fancy, will not happen." He wanted, he said, to be a good Italian, and, if he could not secure his own election, to bring about the promotion of one who would be of service to the Christian religion and to the peace and tranquillity of Italy.'[2]

The situation in Rome was confused and critical after Alexander VI's death, for that event let loose all the pent up enmities which his unscrupulous policy had engendered. The Colonnas, the Orsini, the Savelli, and all the other victims of Borgia oppression rose simultaneously, and reoccupied the places from which the Pope had expelled them. The Vitelli returned to Città di Castello; Gian Paolo Baglione forced his way into Perugia; Piombino, Urbino, Pesaro, Camerino, Sinigaglia, all took back their old rulers. Only Romagna remained true to Cesare. The Pope's son, as he soon afterwards confided to Machiavelli, had foreseen and provided against every danger that could befall on his father's death except that of being himself incapacitated by illness at the time.[3] On his sick-bed he did what he could to meet the emergency. He sent a confidential agent, who at the point

[1] Giustinian, *Dispacci*, vol. ii, pp. 175–7 (abridged).

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 181–2.

[3] 'Ed egli [Cesare Borgia] mi disse ne' dì che fu creato Giulio II, che avea pensato a tutto quello che potesse nascere morendo il padre, e a tutto aveva trovato rimedio, eccetto che non pensò mai in su la sua morte di stare ancora lui per morire': Machiavelli, 'Il Principe,' ch. vii, *Opere*, vol. iv, p. 27.

of the dagger compelled the Pope's Chamberlain to give up the key of the Papal treasury, and he dispatched messengers to summon his soldiers to Rome. Observers doubted whether protection would reach him in time, however, and expected to see him murdered in the palace, for his deadliest enemies were streaming back. Prospero Colonna was hastening from Naples. Fabio Orsini, the son of the murdered Paolo, was approaching at the head of 1,200 men. Cesare himself knew his danger, and decided to seek shelter in the Castle of Sant' Angelo; but the Governor said that he held the castle for the College of Cardinals, and refused to admit him. On 2nd September he left Rome under armed escort to go and join the French. There had been a lively contest for his favour between the French and their enemies, for besides the help which he could give in the Neapolitan war it was supposed that his influence with the College of Cardinals might decide the Papal election. He had begun by negotiating with the Colonnas, and it was then concluded that he had decided to throw his influence into the Spanish scale; but his approaches to the Colonnas were designed solely to prevent a confederacy of all his enemies and to give time for a compact with his old patron, who, as he thought, could help or hinder his plans more effectually than any one else. Confirmed in this view by the lavish promises of d'Amboise, he put away his last doubts, and on 1st September signed an agreement with Louis' representatives: he was to serve with all his forces in the Neapolitan war, Louis guaranteeing him in the possession of the places he retained and promising him help in the recovery of those he had lost.

The agreement would be of small advantage to the King of France, if the Borgia troops should affect the course of military operations as little as Cesare's influence affected the Conclave. The Spanish Cardinals thought more of their own interests than of their obligations to the Borgias, and they did not care to offend Ferdinand and Isabella by electing a French Pope. The Cardinal of Rouen was therefore disappointed in the hopes he had reposed in Cesare. He was no more fortunate in the expectations he had founded upon della Rovere and Ascanio Sforza, who had accompanied him from France, and were profiting by their presence in Rome to intrigue in their own interests. Trivulzio thought that

the King had made a big mistake in letting Cardinal Ascanio go to Rome, and Georges d'Amboise and his master have often been blamed by historians, who say that it was the height of folly to release Ascanio and take him to the Conclave in the belief that he would forget past injuries and further their designs. The criticism implies that Ascanio was released expressly for the purpose of the Papal election, but this is not the fact. Louis had let him out of prison some eighteen months before, and ever since had admitted him to a high degree of favour: the Cardinal was constantly with the King, and they were always going off together to hunt; Ascanio's benefices in the Milanese were given back to him; and the King had written to the Venetians to tell them of his wish that 'his cousin, Cardinal Ascanio', as he called him, might recover the temporalities of the see of Cremona, which the Signory had sequestrated.[1] In view of all this it may be considered that the King and his minister did not show a very culpable credulity, if they founded some expectations upon the gratitude of a former enemy who had been made the recipient of so many favours. But Ascanio felt no gratitude, or at least none which could outweigh his conviction that the election of the Cardinal of Rouen would extinguish for ever the hopes of his House. Like della Rovere, he continued to profess friendship for d'Amboise, whilst secretly doing his utmost to defeat his ends. From della Rovere came the perfidious counsel which induced d'Amboise to suspend the march of the French army, and go on alone to the Conclave. By so doing, said della Rovere, d'Amboise would avoid all appearance of putting pressure on the Sacred College; but his real motive was to obviate the danger that the nearer presence of large French forces must powerfully affect the course of events.

When assured of a reasonable security from interference, the Cardinals entered into Conclave, and the election began. It was seen at once that there were three strong candidates, d'Amboise being one and della Rovere another, and that none of the three could hope for election against the opposition of the other two. Cesare's influence, if it had ever been exerted, had failed of effect, and d'Amboise was not even the strongest of the rivals; in the first ballot, whilst one

[1] Sanuto, *I Diarii*, vol. iv, cols. 234, 330, 439, and vol. v, cols. 137, 203.

opponent secured fifteen votes and the other fourteen, no more than thirteen votes were cast in favour of the Cardinal of Rouen. A compromise being plainly necessary, it was agreed that the three rivals should retire in favour of Francesco Piccolomini, Cardinal of Siena, whom age and infirmity designated as a suitable stop-gap. The election was made on 22nd September, and that day Giustinian wrote to the Senate that 'experience of the new Pope's career induces the hope that his Pontificate will be the exact opposite of the last. He was elected unanimously, though at the beginning he was not even considered. The pretensions of the Cardinal of Rouen were defeated by the machinations of della Rovere, and his by those of Ascanio. . . . When the Cardinal of Rouen saw that he could not succeed, he thought that, if he could not be Pope himself, he had better at all events avoid the ignomy of seeing some one elected, of whom he disapproved. So, like a wise man, he went with the stream, and sought the prestige of getting it to appear that the Pope was of his making. He is greatly incensed against Ascanio, for he can see that he has been taken in by him, and I think that he must regret having left France and brought Ascanio with him. . . . But his wrath is directed chiefly against the Duke of Valentinois, by whom he considers that he has been betrayed, and whom he reviles with much passion; indeed, he lays at his door the blame for the whole affair, for letters from the Duke to the Cardinals couched in terms very unfriendly to him have fallen into his hands, and, since the Duke had given him to understand the exact opposite, this has excited in him a very vehement indignation.'[1] His indignation was shared by his Royal master, who startled the company in the Queen's apartments by the violence of his outburst, when Cesare's name happened to be mentioned. 'That son of a whore', exclaimed the King, 'has prevented Rouen from becoming Pope.'[2]

The election over, there was no reason why the French army should linger in the neighbourhood of Rome, where much precious time had already been lost; and on 26th September it continued its march. La Trémoille was no longer in command, for he had fallen sick during the unhealthy summer,

[1] Giustinian, *Dispacci*, vol. ii, pp. 200–1.
[2] Sanuto, *I Diarii*, vol. v, col. 516.

and had been invalided home; and, even had he been present to direct its operations, it would have been doubtful whether the army would have been adequate in size to the task which it would be required to perform. An unfavourable opinion was expressed by the Angevin barons in exile in Rome, who were best qualified to judge of military conditions in Naples; and their representations much increased the Cardinal of Rouen's eagerness to come to terms with the Orsini, with whom he was already in treaty for service in the Neapolitan war. Giustinian told the Signory that the French realized that they could do no good without the Orsini, and were especially anxious to secure Bartolommeo d'Alviano, partly because he was a good soldier, and partly because his troops were ready. The Spaniards were also in treaty with him, both sides thinking it vital to secure him, for without him it would be very perilous, if not actually impossible, for the French to go on.[1] In this important matter d'Amboise had to pay the penalty for his ill-starred patronage of Cesare, for after he had agreed with Giulio Orsini that he and his whole House should enter Louis XII's service, Bartolommeo d'Alviano intervened, and in his disgust at the favour shown to Cesare carried the Orsini over into the Spanish camp. It was thought that Baglione, whose services the French were also trying to enlist, would follow the same course; but d'Amboise was resolved that this additional disaster should be avoided at any cost, and offered to accept whatever terms Baglione might propose. Ostensibly, therefore, Baglione entered the French service, and, having received an advance of pay, went off to Perugia, to collect his men. But instead of joining the French army, he invented one pretext after another for lingering on in his native city, and d'Amboise concluded that with the usual perfidy of Italian *condottieri* he had come to a secret understanding with the Spaniards at the very time when he was making his open agreement with the French. Even Cesare, whose alliance had cost the French so dear, was to prove as useless in the field as he had already proved in the Conclave, for concurrently with the agreement between Spain and the Orsini a reconciliation between the Orsini and the Colonnas was brought about by Spanish and Venetian influence, and this so much terrified Cesare,

[1] Giustinian, *Dispacci*, vol. ii, pp. 209–10.

that he fled to the Castle of Sant' Angelo, leaving his men to disperse.[1] As a result of these events it was generally assumed in Rome that the Spaniards would be victorious and drive the French from Naples.

The Cardinal of Rouen felt little doubt that the agreement between Bartolommeo d'Alviano and the Spaniards had been furtively arranged by the Venetians, because they wished to prevent the establishment of the French in Naples; and when the news reached Venice, the French ambassador went in a towering rage to the Senate, and told them that it was well understood that the Signory were at the bottom of the affair, that Alviano was their man, and that they could exonerate themselves only by issuing an order for his recall. The Doge answered that Alviano was not their man, since his term of service had just expired, and assured the ambassador that steps had been taken to prevent his company leaving Venetian territory. He was sorry about the turn which affairs had taken, he added, but considered that the Cardinal of Rouen was to blame, because he had shown favour to Cesare, who was the enemy of the Orsini House; and whoever helped Cesare did a thing which was in itself evil.[2] Whether well founded or not, the Cardinal's suspicions were certainly natural, seeing that Alviano himself proclaimed that the motive which had induced him to throw in his lot with Spain was his desire to please the Signory. Two days before the signature of the agreement Alviano had visited Giustinian, the Venetian ambassador in Rome, and had asked him what course the Signory would like him to pursue. By way of reply Giustinian conveyed to him the tenour of the Signory's dispatches. 'Enough', he said, 'I understand the Signory's meaning, though you do not express it plainly. I shall now go and see the Spanish ambassador. I always wish to serve Venice, and it will be as well to do the best I can for myself, that I may serve her the better.'[3] Yet as lately as a fortnight before, Giustinian had written to the Senate that, 'as Alviano is supposed to be your man, I have been asked to prevent him joining the French; but I have acted with great reserve, seeing that I am in-

[1] Guicciardini, *Storia d'Italia*, ed. Gherardi, vol. ii, pp. 87–90.
[2] Sanuto, *I Diarii*, vol. v, cols. 182–3.
[3] *Ibid.*, col. 176.

structed not to interfere, where French and Spanish interests are at stake'.[1]

Scarcely had interest in the Orsini *condotta* died down, when Rome was plunged into a fresh excitement by the death of Pius III, the lately elected Pope. 'All the Cardinals are busied in intrigues', wrote Giustinian, with unconcealed disgust, in announcing the news, 'and some show small respect for God or their sacred office; bargains are made openly, for it seems that nowadays a refusal to bargain is regarded as unbecoming; nor do men deal in small sums, but in thousands and tens of thousands, to the shame of our religion and the dishonour of the Almighty, since now there is nothing to choose between the Papacy and the Sultanate—each is knocked down to the highest bidder. Rome is quiet, though there are many Orsini soldiers here in the Spanish service, and also some men of Baglione's, who are in the French interest. However, the Orsini are now at peace with the Colonnesi, and get on all right with Baglione's men. . . . There are three likely candidates. The Cardinal of Naples will not get many votes, however, because he is suspected of French sympathies; the Cardinal of San Giorgio is objected to on account of his age; and so the chances are in favour of della Rovere. No one talks of Ascanio or of Cardinal Colonna; nor is there any mention of the Cardinal of Rouen; yet they are afraid of him, and he is in every one's mind.'[2] The Senate replied, instructing Giustinian to exert his influence 'in the manner already indicated'; but when on the morrow the Spanish ambassador asked if they would wish the Spanish votes cast in favour of any particular candidate, the Doge professed a lofty disinterestedness. In these spiritual matters, he said, their forefathers had made it a rule to leave the issue in the hands of God, because it sometimes happened that mortal men would strive for some end which they believed to be good, and afterwards it would turn out to be evil. If his only son were a Cardinal, he would not interfere beyond praying that God might direct the election in the best interests of Christianity.[3]

The even balance of conflicting interests which had

[1] Giustinian, *Dispacci*, vol. ii, p. 211.
[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 253–5; Sanuto, *I Diarii*, vol. v, col. 204.
[3] Sanuto, *I Diarii*, vol. v, cols. 207–9.

resulted in the compromise of the preceding month did not recur on the death of Pius III, and the election was virtually decided in favour of Giuliano della Rovere before the Cardinals entered into Conclave. D'Amboise concurred in the promotion of his rival, because he knew that there was no chance for himself, and believed della Rovere to be well disposed towards France. Ascanio Sforza concurred for an opposite reason; knowing della Rovere better than d'Amboise knew him, he expected that, when he was Pope, he would continue to show the restless ambition which he had displayed in humbler positions; and therefore he looked forward to a period of turmoil, in which the Sforzas might get a chance to recover Milan. The Spanish Cardinals assented, partly because they were encouraged to do so by Cesare, and partly because they thought that they could not defeat della Rovere's candidature, and would do better to please him by giving their support than to exasperate him by offering an ineffectual opposition.[1] With France, Spain, Venice, Ascanio Sforza, and Cesare Borgia acting in unison to secure the election of one candidate, the Conclave was over almost before it had begun, and on 1st November Giuliano della Rovere mounted the throne of St. Peter under the name of Julius II.

Our narrative will presently demand an examination of the policy and conduct of this famous Pontiff, but before embarking upon that topic it will be convenient to follow to a close the story of the partition of Naples. I pause now only to remark that one of the first acts of the new Pope was to fulfil the promise made by his predecessor, and to confirm Georges d'Amboise in the Legatine authority which had been conferred upon him by Alexander VI. Significant as it was in its personal and political aspects, the appointment possessed an importance yet more enduring. Till the end of the fifteenth century there had been no central authority in the Gallican Church, and, although the Papacy had more than once attempted to give it a head, those attempts had not succeeded. The institution of a national Legate in the person of Georges d'Amboise was a new fact in the ecclesiastical life of France. In virtue of the powers conferred by Alexander VI and confirmed by Julius II, d'Amboise was invested with an indisputable authority over the whole

[1] Guicciardini, *Storia d'Italia*, ed. Gherardi, vol. ii, pp. 90–1.

Gallican Church. He received the right to confer benefices and prebends, to judge ecclesiastical causes on appeal, and to undertake monastic reform; he was given powers which enabled him to intervene in episcopal elections; he occupied a position in which it fell to him to act as an intermediary between Pope and King. The soreness which he had felt in the defeat of his candidature for the Triple Crown might well have been mitigated by the reflection that the Pope himself did not always speak with as much authority, or command as much respect, as the man who reigned supreme over the temporal and the spiritual life of France.[1]

When the Cardinal of Rouen turned his back upon Rome, retracing his steps to France, the French army, which had been detained to support his candidature for the Papacy, was beginning to learn the price which it would be called upon to pay for being used as the instrument of his ambition. Upon receiving information of its approach, Gonsalvo, who was still at Castellone, abandoned the investment of Gaeta, whereupon its garrison was summoned to join the forces marching from Rome. Weaker in numbers, and greatly inferior in the quality of his cavalry and artillery, Gonsalvo was obliged to follow once more the plan which had answered so well at Barletta, and put himself in a position in which he could play for time to permit of the situation being changed by the coming of reinforcements or by the misfortune or the blundering of the enemy. He thought at first of holding out at San Germano, but quickly gave up that plan, and placed himself behind the Garigliano, a river which was too deep to be forded, and which would therefore present a formidable obstacle to an army attempting to cross it in the face of opposition. The French advanced confidently, but met with an unexpected check at Rocca Secca, one of the fortresses covering the approaches to San Germano, where the garrison behaved with great gallantry and beat off two assaults. Discouraged by this resistance, the Marquis of Mantua, who had been appointed to the command on the departure of La Trémoille, turned from his path, and moved down the right bank of the Garigliano, to get into touch with the French fleet and to devise in consultation with its officers a means of crossing the river.

[1] Imbart de la Tour, *Les Origines de la Réforme*, vol. ii, pp. 183–5.

Prégent de Bidoux was cruising with his galleys off the mouth of the Garigliano, and the assistance sought by his colleagues on shore was of a kind which that intrepid and resourceful officer was well qualified to render. It was agreed that Prégent should come in under cover of the guns and construct a bridge of boats, the spot selected being in the neighbourhood of Traetto, near the mouth of the river. The French guns were got into position; Prégent stood in; and presently a bridge was in being, constructed of boats lashed together and surmounted by planks. Serviceable enough in its way, and strong enough to serve the army without mishap during two stormy winter months, the bridge yet possessed the disadvantage that only small bodies of troops could pass at one time, and those who passed first must risk destruction by the enemy before their friends could join them. Here, then, was a chance for deeds of knightly valour, and at the head of the volunteers who aspired to the post of danger went the Seigneur de Bayard, so eager to be first over the bridge that he did not even stay to don his armour. Fourteen men-at-arms went with him; three or four hundred men followed; and such was the impetuosity of the French attack that the Spanish advance-guard fell back in disorder. But large Spanish forces were awaiting the signal for action, and a dashing charge of twelve hundred infantry under Pedro Navarro forced Bayard and his scanty following back upon the bridge. There in a fierce struggle hand-to-hand they fought with the reckless courage which was native to the French *gendarmerie*, and was never so lavishly displayed as when a Bayard led the charge or stood to bar the breach. Thinking, however, that the time was unfavourable for a general engagement, the French leaders ordered the retreat, and then the guns, which Bayard and his men had masked, could resume their fire and once more compel the enemy to fall back. The bridge-head remained in French hands, and its safety was secured by the construction of a redoubt.

For two dreary months the two armies then sat down and watched each other, for winter set in early that year, with a severity most unusual in that region, and in a country waterlogged by torrential rains it was impossible for the French to employ the cavalry and guns, in which their strength consisted. On both sides of the river the conditions

in the camps soon became unspeakably wretched. On the bank occupied by the Spaniards the ground rose slightly about a mile from the bridge, and the trifling eminence was crowned by an insignificant hamlet. Hither Gonsalvo retired, to watch the bridge against the time when the conditions might so far improve as to tempt the enemy once more to essay a passage. Here in the miserable hovels of the peasants or in still more miserable shelters of their own erection a part of his force found an incomplete protection against the bitter cold and against driving storms of sleet and rain. In the outposts on the lower ground their less fortunate comrades stood up to the knees in water and mud save where an occasional pile of faggots offered a precarious refuge from the floods. Behind the position lay a half deserted region, from which it was difficult to draw supplies; and hunger often came to intensify sufferings already barely supportable. The Spanish officers pressed upon their leader the expediency of a retirement to Capua, where the men would suffer less and run less danger from the proximity of a superior enemy. Gonsalvo proudly refused, declaring that he would rather go forwards a pace, were it towards death, than win a hundred years of life by giving way an inch. His duty was to stay where he was and hold up the enemy, and he believed that he might rely upon the sobriety, discipline, and devotion of his men to carry them through privations, of which he himself took his full share.

The French on the opposite bank occupied higher and healthier ground, and enjoyed better protection from the bad weather. Yet even so their discomforts were very great, and were increased by the peculations of the Royal commissaries in Rome, who in their thirst for illicit gains pocketed the pay of the army and omitted to supply it with food. As early as 12th November it was reported that there was great scarcity in the camp; the horses were without oats, hay, and straw, and had nothing but grass and the leaves of trees and vines; bread and corn were very dear, and often could not be had at any price.[1] The physical effects of these conditions rapidly became serious; the men went down with fever and sickness, and the mortality among the horses was so great that men-at-arms, who had brought four or five chargers with

[1] Sanuto, *I Diarii*, vol. v, col. 475.

them, were left without a mount. The moral consequences were equally disastrous, for the French and their Swiss mercenaries, who lacked the patient endurance of the Spaniards, chafed at inaction, and grew mutinous under privation and hardship. While the men grumbled and sulked, the officers vented their discontent on the Marquis of Mantua, for whom they felt no respect, and whom they did not hesitate to tax with incapacity. The Marquis in turn complained with some justice of the seditious spirit of his subordinates, and threw up his command, ostensibly because he was unwell, but in reality because he was disgusted, and despaired of victory. The Marquis of Saluzzo, who succeeded him, was unable to restore discipline or to check the growing demoralization. Some of the French and Italian gentlemen began to leave the army; others moved to distant quarters in search of food and shelter; and by Christmas a demoralized infantry alone remained to hold the French bank of the lower Garigliano.

Through the eyes of a close and shrewd student of military affairs we may obtain a nearer view of the rival armies. 'The French have established themselves firmly on the Garigliano,' wrote Machiavelli from Rome on 21st November, 'and the Spaniards have not been able to prevent them from setting foot on the further bank, or to drive them from it afterwards. It is generally held that the Spaniards, being in inferior numbers, cannot offer battle, but must fall back on strong positions, as they did formerly at San Germano, and have done again now on the Garigliano. Beaten on the bank of the river, they have fallen back about a mile, and there with ditches and earth-works have confronted the French with a new obstacle. The French have been prevented from advancing by the badness of the weather, for, as the country is low-lying and marshy and it rains incessantly, both sides have been obliged to hold only their earth-works, and to break up their armies and quarter them in neighbouring hamlets. Both sides alike have been worsted by the floods and the weather, which seemed to be mending yesterday, but to-day is hopelessly wet again, with every appearance of continued rain. Both camps suffer from want of litter and provisions, especially the French, who occupy a district which has been more thoroughly drained of supplies, and this may become serious for them, if they cannot advance; but

they have an advantage in ample supplies of money, the lack of which may greatly prejudice the Spaniards. The general opinion, all things considered, is that the French have more funds and better troops, the Spaniards more skilful leadership and better luck.'[1]

After an interval of three weeks Machiavelli wrote again, to report the views of a certain Messer Ambrogio, 'who left the French camp a week ago, and says that they are suffering great hardships for lack of litter, bread, and quarters; the troops fit for service barely amount to 900 men-at-arms and 6,000 foot; and it is said that the Spaniards have received reinforcements of infantry. Nevertheless, he thinks that the news, current here, of a Spanish retreat may be true, for the Spaniards, he says, have not been able to pay for their supplies, and a few weeks ago were commandeering them from the country round about. Possibly they can no longer do this, and have been obliged to go where supplies can be obtained. He reports that three causes have so far prevented a French victory: first, and by far the most important, the long delay under the walls of Rome, which deprived them of the chance of advancing unimpeded by rains and swollen rivers at a time when Gonsalvo could not have offered opposition; secondly, the lack of artillery horses, which prevented them from advancing more than two miles a day; thirdly, the bitter winter, which overtook them and still continues; and never, he says, have they planned any operation but the bad weather has become infinitely worse. Be that as it may, he declares that Gonsalvo, even if he has not retired, could not venture to attack, for the French are in a strong position, and are the sort of people who would welcome a fight with anyone.'[2]

Messer Ambrogio's account of the situation on the Garigliano was in the main well informed, but before the month was over, events would convict him of rashness in attempting to gauge the offensive capabilities of an army, in which the brain of Gonsalvo devised operations, and the disciplined infantry of Spain carried them into execution. By the end of December the conditions in which Gonsalvo had been content to contain the enemy had been changed radically by the arrival of Alviano with his Italian levies in his own camp

[1] Machiavelli, *Opere*, vol. iv, pp. 393–4. [2] *Ibid.*, pp. 458–9.

and by the mistakes and misfortunes of the French, whose forces, weakened by sickness and defections, were so widely scattered in quest of food and shelter that a surprise attack upon any portion of their front was likely to encounter but a feeble opposition. The details of such an attack were then worked out in consultation with Alviano: a bridge of boats was to be prepared in secret; on a suitable night it was to be thrown across the river under cover of darkness at a point about four miles above the main French position; and at dawn the bulk of the Spanish army was to cross the river, whilst the rear-guard would create a diversion by attacking the French bridge. By the evening of 27th December all was ready. The night set in wet and stormy, with the sky obscured by rain-charged clouds; and the habitual negligence of the incautious enemy was augmented by the distractions incidental to the Christmas season. At dusk Alviano, who was to lead the van, brought his materials to the bank, and began to construct the bridge. Across the river lay the hamlet of Suio, occupied by the French; and much would depend upon whether its garrison should become aware of Alviano's activities. As the hours passed, and the bridge slowly grew, all remained still in Suio; the garrison slept on in total ignorance of that which was afoot near by; and when at length it awoke, it was to behold the swords of Alviano's troopers offering a choice between death and surrender. Thus the enemy were across the river in force before the Marquis of Saluzzo received a hint of his danger, and, when suddenly confronted with it, he lost his head. In a hurriedly convened council of war he decided to retreat on Gaeta, abandoning whatever could not easily be moved. Sending Yves d'Alègre with 400 men-at-arms to check the Spaniards who had crossed the river, destroying his own bridge to prevent pursuit by those who were still on the farther bank, and summoning Prégent de Bidoux to come and embark the heavy guns, he set out for Gaeta in a state bordering on panic, and left behind him the bulk of his munitions, his tents and baggage, his sick and his wounded. He was soon rejoined by d'Alègre, who had been sent forward too late, and, finding himself confronted by imposing forces, fell hurriedly back upon his own main body. That body was already making with all speed for the sheltering defences of Gaeta, the light

artillery in the van, the infantry in the centre, and in the rear all the men-at-arms whose horses were fit for service, charged with the duty of delaying the pursuit.

As soon as he heard of the retrograde movement of the French, Gonsalvo sent his light horse forward under Prospero Colonna, to harry the retreating columns; but they were easily kept in check by the heavy cavalry of the French, favoured as these were by the broken country, which left room only for small numbers to become engaged on the narrow road. The progress of the French was, indeed, slow, for it was no light task to drag the guns over the sodden roads, but in the narrow passes and on the numerous bridges their chivalry turned at bay, winning respite after respite for the toiling gunners and the tired foot. In this fashion the retreating army made its way as far as the bridge at Mola di Gaeta, but there its progress was checked by the overturning of some gun-carriages and by the consequent confusion in the advance-guard and among the infantry which followed. Once more the indomitable *gendarmerie* faced about, to defend the approaches to the bridge, and a bitter struggle ensued, in which Bayard had three horses killed under him, and was on the point of losing his own life, when he was rescued by the gallantry of a friend. The French would, perhaps, have continued to hold their pursuers in check, had not an unexpected occurrence decided the issue of the fray. This was the coming of the Spanish rear-guard under Andrada, who had repaired the bridge left broken by the French, and, marching by a direct route, brought his men comparatively fresh on to the field in the crisis of the struggle. Vigorously assaulted by the newcomers, and simultaneously menaced by a movement of the Spanish cavalry, which was working round to cut their retreat, the weary French broke and fled. Many reached Gaeta in safety, but large numbers were cut down or captured, and all the guns and many horses fell into the pursuers' hands. To complete the tragedy of the day, a violent storm overtook the boats which had essayed to carry off the big guns by sea, and all save Prégent's were swamped. Amongst the drowned was Piero de' Medici, who was following the French army, and had requested of Prégent the fatal boon of a passage to Gaeta.

The town of Gaeta, in which the remnants of the defeated

army had found refuge, was a place of great natural strength, and with the help of the fleet, which lay in the harbour, it might easily have been held against Gonsalvo, as it had already been held after the disaster at Cerignola earlier in the year. Broken by sickness and suffering, however, and crushed by repeated defeats, the French had had their fill of fighting. The Monte d'Orlando, the most important external defence-work, surrendered without waiting to be attacked. Three days later, on 1st January 1504, before Gonsalvo's batteries were ready to open fire, the town itself approached him with a flag of truce. Terms of capitulation were quickly arranged, for the condition of Gonsalvo's own army was not such that he could afford to be harsh. Gaeta was to be evacuated at once and delivered up to the Spaniards with guns, munitions, and military stores; the French were to be allowed a free passage home by land or sea; and prisoners on both sides were to be restored.

Next day Bartolommeo d'Alviano wrote to his brother in Rome, to describe the victory and to relate his own share in it; and he took the opportunity to pay a handsome tribute to the great soldier under whom he had been privileged to serve. 'The Great Captain', he said, 'has treated me with the utmost honour . . . and his behaviour to me could not have been improved upon. Throughout the operations his attitude has been one of the greatest consideration and frankness, and I wish for nothing better than to fight under such a leader. He has qualities which might well be compared with those of Scipio Africanus, for he has courage, vigilance, and swiftness of decision, combined with moderation and high principles, and these are the very qualities of which one reads in Africanus. Small wonder, if he wins victories, for it seems quite impossible that any who fight under his banners should lose. At the same time he is a most devout observer of religious duties and a man of firm faith; and never have I seen in him, either in word or in deed, aught that was not good.' [1]

The troubles of the beaten army were not yet ended. When the news of the loss of Gaeta reached the French Court, the King shut himself up in his room, and there brooded over his humiliation, until his health became seriously impaired. In his first fury he turned upon the commissaries, whose dishonesty had contributed to the disaster,

[1] Sanuto, *I Diarii*, vol. v, cols. 697–9.

meted out divers punishments, and sent one of them to the scaffold. His resentment against Yves d'Alègre and Sandricourt, the officers who had surrendered Gaeta, found expression in an order that they should not re-enter France, but must remain in the Milanese. The rank and file of the army he left without pay and without transport, to make their way home as best they might. How they fared in that endeavour may be read in the dispatches of Giustinian. 'The remnants of the French army are hourly arriving in Rome. They are despoiled and even actually naked; nor have they refuge or resting-place; and to avoid perishing of cold, they go—if I may be pardoned for mentioning such details—and bury themselves up to the heads in the dung-heaps. And of such pitiable creatures there are, not handfuls merely, but literally hundreds. . . . In this defeat of the French His Holiness has come out as a sympathizer with them, and in addition to other favours he has made Cardinal Colonna go off to the estates of his family, to see to it that the returning French—those, I mean, who were not in the defeat, being nearer Rome—should be given lodgings and treated properly and not injured by the people living on the Colonna properties. However, the assistance comes rather late in the day, for nearly all have been robbed and plundered by the peasantry, and every day they may be seen coming naked into Rome, so that the sight of them excites compassion. Yet injury does not protect them from insult, for when on their outward march to Naples they did much harm to the Romans; and the Romans, mindful of their wrongs, but unable to exact amends from the destitute, avenge themselves by abuse, so that, as soon as a Frenchman shows himself in the streets, he is pursued by derisive cries.'[1] In other contemporary accounts of the plight of these miserable fugitives there is evidence that Rome was not the only place where their fate failed to inspire pity in the minds of patriotic Italians, who remembered the sufferings of their country. 'In this time of cold', wrote Landucci, the Florentine diarist, 'many French—as many as were able—had fled from the Regno naked and destitute. In the neighbourhood of Rome large numbers died in the ditches of cold and hunger; nor did they find any to help them, because of the cruel murders

[1] Giustinian, *Dispacci*, vol. ii, pp. 375–6, 379.

and robberies which they had committed in the city. For that cause were they suffered by Providence to die upon the dunghills of Rome, whither in their nakedness they resorted for warmth; and all would have perished, had not the Pope supplied them with cloaks and money, and put them upon vessels bound for France. Even as it was, more than five hundred died of cold, and were found of a morning naked and dead on the dunghills. In Rome they would enter the houses, wherever a door was open; nor could they be induced to leave, not even by blows, for they said: "Kill us!" Never was such destruction seen. Yet their King sent them no help, and thought of them not at all. It was the judgement of Heaven upon vicious and godless blasphemers, who had come to slay and to steal.'[1]

One bright example relieved the general gloom. At the time of the fall of Gaeta Louis d'Ars still held out in Venosa, where he had established himself upon his escape from the field of Cerignola, and where out of isolated bodies of his countrymen he had formed a by no means despicable force. Apulia had been kept in constant commotion by his sallies, and he had even succeeded in capturing Troja and San Severo by audacious *coups de main*. Comprised in the capitulation of Gaeta, he had refused to accept it; and, when all else was lost, the banner of France still floated in solitary defiance over the battlements of Venosa. Nor would he consent to pull that banner down, until he had received the express orders of his sovereign to desist from a hopeless struggle. Even then he 'disdained to surrender, but sallied out at the head of his little troop of gallant veterans, and thus, armed at all points, says Brantôme, with lance in rest, took his way through Naples and the centre of Italy. He marched in battle array, levying contributions for his support on the places through which he passed. In this manner he entered France, and presented himself before the Court at Blois. The King and Queen, delighted with his prowess, came forward to welcome him, and made good cheer, says the old chronicler, for himself and his companions, whom they recompensed with liberal largesses, proffering at the same time any boon to the brave knight which he should demand for himself. The latter in return simply requested

[1] Landucci, *Diario Fiorentino*, ed. I. del Badia, pp. 265–6.

that his old comrade Yves d'Alègre should be recalled from exile. This trait of magnanimity, when contrasted with the general ferocity of the times, has something in it inexpressibly pleasing. It shows, like others recorded of the French gentlemen of that period, that the age of chivalry—the chivalry of romance, indeed—had not wholly passed away.'[1]

The disaster in Naples was fraught with peril for France, for her men and her money were gone, and she would have found it difficult to defend her other Italian possessions against the assaults of a resolute enemy. Louis XII recognized the danger, and in March 1504 made a truce with Ferdinand of Aragon, which guaranteed him peaceable possession of Naples for a period of three years. The bargain amounted to an admission that the dominions of the Angevins were lost beyond the hope of recovery. The causes of the failure have become apparent, as we have followed its story: they were the difficulties inherent in a distant war, the delay of the army before Rome, defective leadership and frequent changes in the command, the dishonesty of the commissariat officers, and a national temperament impatient of adversity and hardship. When Machiavelli sat down to pronounce judgement upon the French, he noted among their characteristics an inability 'to endure hardship and privation, which have the effect of disordering them so much that it becomes easy to defeat them. This was often shown in the Neapolitan wars, the most recent instance being on the Garigliano, where they were half as strong again as the Spaniards, whom they were expected hourly to swallow up; but when the winter came with very heavy rains, they went off one by one to the adjacent districts to look for more comfortable quarters; the camp was left disordered and half deserted; and the Spaniards were able to win an unlooked for victory.'[2] The consequences of that victory were not difficult to foresee. It meant that a second foreign power was about to take root on the soil of Italy, dominating the centre and the south, as France already dominated the north; and the death-knell of Italian freedom was sounded by the trumpets which proclaimed the triumph of the Spaniards on the banks of the Garigliano.

[1] Prescott, *History of the Reign of Ferdinand and Isabella*, p. 576.
[2] Machiavelli, 'Ritratti delle cose della Francia', *Opere*, vol. vi, p. 300.

XX

THE MARRIAGE OF MADAME CLAUDE

'The years following the disastrous wars of Naples', says one modern writer, 'were years of uneasy watchfulness, of bewildering arrangements and re-arrangements of unstable leagues and combinations, of mendacious protestations of friendship, and treacherous provocations addressed to jealousy and greed.'[1] The policies of the most important sovereigns in Europe, says another, were purely personal policies, governed by family interests and ambitions, and 'up to 1508 the question of marriage alliances was the pivot on which the various combinations turned. The divergence between the family preoccupations of the sovereigns and their real interests as heads of States accounts both for the hesitation of their actions and the paltry nature of events. The divergence was most strongly marked in Louis XII and his advisers. In becoming King of France he did not cease to be a Duke of Orleans; and because the Milanese was the lawful patrimony of his family, he could think of nothing else. Nor was that all. Great as was the cost in the gold and the blood of his subjects at which these demesnes had been acquired, yet he could without much difficulty be brought to entertain the idea of disposing of them as the dowries of his daughters, Claude and Renée, and so allowing them to pass under a foreign yoke. This tendency in his own mind may perhaps explain why he was not more opposed to the particularist obsessions of his wife. Even the chief man in the Government, Georges d'Amboise, by reason of his candidature for the Papacy, had special interests of his own apart from the policy of France, the direction of which had been entrusted to his hands. Hence a most complicated play of diplomacy, which . . . engrossed the men of that day, and is the distinguishing mark of the epoch.'[2]

The figure of a little girl flits across the background of the changing scene. My readers will recollect that, when Anne of Brittany was being pressed to marry Louis XII, she ob-

[1] *Cambridge Modern History*, vol. i, p. 128.

[2] M. H. Lemonnier, in the *Histoire de France*, ed. Lavisse, vol. v, part i, p. 68; and cf. p. 83.

jected that he was already married to Jeanne, and foretold that, if he should contract another union, Heaven would express its disapproval by denying him an heir. The prediction seemed to be fulfilled, when the hopes of the Royal spouses, repeatedly revived by the Queen's frequent pregnancies, were as repeatedly blighted by a long succession of miscarriages and still-born babes. In the end, the offspring of the marriage consisted of two daughters; and as the younger of these, Renée, was not born until 1510, there was a period of eleven years during which the elder, Claude, who was born in 1499, was the sole occupant of the Royal nursery. Claude had not been long in the world, when she became an object of desire in other Royal Houses, covetous of the inheritance which might become her portion, if no brother should be born to defeat her expectations. As heiress of her father, she would presumably succeed to all from which the Salic law did not debar her, and in that event she would become entitled to the Orleans demesnes, which were the King's private patrimony, to the Visconti inheritance in Milan and Asti, to Genoa, and to the Angevin claims in Naples. By the terms of her parents' marriage contract the independent sovereignty of Brittany would also be revived in her person or in that of the husband whom marriage might invest with her rights. Many a crowned head would think that he had done well in contracting a match but half as brilliant, and it was not long before the hand of the heiress was sought for Charles of Luxemburg, who, through his father, the Archduke Philip, and his mother, Joanna, daughter of the Catholic sovereigns, was himself the heir to Austria, Burgundy, and Spain.

The capture of an heiress was not the only advantage which the Archduke promised himself in this suit, for interest and inclination both prompted him to seek a durable accord with the King of France. As a man, he liked Louis personally. As a ruler, he wished to be on good terms with a powerful neighbour, who was the suzerain of part of his dominions, who in the event of friction could cause him much embarrassment, and who in the event of a serious breach could encourage and support his domestic enemies and stiffen the resistance of the Duke of Guelders, his implacable and indomitable foe. He was influenced also by his position as the

husband of Joanna of Spain, upon whom the government of Castile would rightfully devolve on the death of her mother, Isabella, for he was sure that Joanna would be confronted by the pretensions of her father, Ferdinand, and in a dispute with Ferdinand over Joanna's claims the friendship of France might make all the difference between failure and success.

It may appear strange that Louis should have dallied with the notion of any foreign match for his daughter, seeing what her dowry might one day be; and it must seem almost incredible that he should really have contemplated the possibility of that dowry being absorbed by the House of Austria, the inheritors of the Burgundian feud and the jealous rivals of the French Crown. So far as Louis did seriously entertain the notion of the Austrian marriage, he was influenced by personal and dynastic considerations, which had nothing whatever to do with questions of national safety or welfare. In the year 1501, in which the project was first broached by the Archduke, Louis had lately completed the conquest of Milan and negotiated the partition of Naples. In Milan he could never feel secure, so long as Maximilian should refuse to grant him an investiture, and should keep his hands free to support the pretensions of the Sforzas. But he knew full well that Maximilian was possessed by the most bitter hatred of France, and there seemed to be one way, and one alone, in which he could be induced to grant the favour which Louis desired. Strong as it was, his detestation of France was less powerful than his dynastic ambition, and his constant aim was to increase the mighty inheritance of the infant grandson, who was already the heir to such great possessions. So far as Maximilian was concerned, therefore, the Austrian marriage was the bait with which Louis angled for an investiture of the Milanese. So far as Ferdinand was concerned, the partition of Naples had not yet given rise to difficulties, for it had not been carried out; but the character of Ferdinand was well known, and Louis foresaw a time when a firm friendship with the heirs to Castile might provide a useful check upon the crafty and unscrupulous ruler of Aragon.

The King's Austrian policy found a warm supporter in his Breton Queen, the mainspring of whose political conduct was an unwavering determination to preserve the independ-

ence of her beloved province. The terms of the contract which she had imposed upon the King, when she had married him, provided that in default of male heirs Brittany should descend to a daughter; and to unite that daughter to an Austrian husband was the surest guarantee against the absorption of the Duchy in France. Her desire for a separatist settlement was intensified by her dislike of the patriotic alternative. If Claude's hand were not bestowed upon a foreign Prince, there was but one eligible bridegroom, and he was the young Count of Angoulême, the heir presumptive to the French throne. The thought of such a union was highly distasteful to the Queen. She disliked the boy himself, strongly disapproved of the way in which he was being brought up, and detested his mother, Louise of Savoy, dreading the day when she should rise to power by her son's accession to the throne. Under the empire of these sentiments she was ready enough to see France dismembered and imperilled, if only she could cloud the triumph of a hated rival by diminishing the inheritance of that rival's son. Whatever may be thought of Anne of Brittany's attitude, at all events it must be said for her that she was consistent and sincere. Could the same be said of Louis XII? At the price of certain contingent promises he sought certain political ends. He did so in the knowledge that the birth of a son might at any moment relieve him of the burden of his engagements and with a mental reservation which covered the case of a lack of male heirs. By a secret document he had already declared that, as long as he had no son, any marriage contract for his daughter other than with the heir to the throne was to be deemed null and void as being at variance with his coronation oath. His policy varying with his international relationships, he himself would probably have found it hard to say how far he was sincere. The prudent historian will therefore content himself with the observation that his statesmanship becomes defensible only to the degree in which we question his good faith.[1]

Negotiations for Claude's betrothal were initiated in the

[1] Lavisse, *Histoire de France*, vol. v, part i, pp. 67–70; Le Glay, *Négociations diplomatiques entre la France et l'Autriche durant les trente premières années du XVI^e Siècle*, vol. i, p. xliii; Le Roux de Lincy, *Vie de la Reine Anne de Bretagne*, vol. i, pp. 214–17.

spring of 1501, when the Archduke Philip sent an imposing embassy to France to request the hand of Louis' infant daughter for his own infant son, Charles of Luxemburg. The proposal being favourably received by Louis XII, the Bishop of Albi and Marshal de Gié were instructed to arrange the terms of a contract with the Archduke's representatives, and on 10th August a treaty was signed at Lyons. The King and Queen of France undertook to use their best endeavours that Claude should marry Charles, when both should have reached marriageable age, and promised to allow her 20,000 *l.t.* a year. If the King and Queen should die without leaving a son, Claude was to have her full share in the succession to her father, mother, and other relatives; and if they should leave a son, then in lieu of her successional rights she was to have a fixed sum of 300,000 *l.t.*, of which 200,000 *l.t.* would be provided by the King and 100,000 *l.t.* by the Queen. If either Claude or Charles should die before the solemnization of the intended marriage, and the King or the Archduke, as the case might be, should have another marriageable child, such child was to be substituted for the deceased child. If there should be male children of the intended marriage, the eldest was to be Duke of Brittany. Finally, the contracting parties were to give all necessary guarantees for the accomplishment of the intended marriage.[1]

The King and Queen of France, according to their historiographer, were delighted with a bargain which seemed to promise a durable peace with Maximilian, the father of the Archduke, and with Ferdinand, the father of the Archduchess, and both sought for an appropriate method of expressing their satisfaction. Whilst Louis presented the Archduke with a year's yield of the *gabelle* at Château-Chinon and Noyers, Anne of Brittany, as became a lady, devised festivities in honour of the occasion. A sumptuous banquet was followed by a dance in the form of a mime. The dancers entered in couples, richly attired in the national costumes of France, Germany, Italy, and Spain. 'Lastly, there entered a person great of stature and proud of mien, dressed with

[1] Le Glay, *Négociations diplomatiques entre la France et l'Autriche*, vol. i, pp. xlvi, 28–34; Quinsonas, *Matériaux pour servir à l'histoire de Marguerite d'Autriche*, vol. iii, pp. 29–33; Dupuy, *Histoire de la réunion de la Bretagne à la France*, vol. ii, pp. 258–60.

incomparable richness. Seeking a partner up and down the room amongst all the ladies present, he was of all refused; and thereat he cast his sceptre upon the floor, shivering it in fragments, and withdrew in bitter confusion. It was generally understood that he represented the Great Turk, who at that time menaced France, Germany, Italy, and Spain, but who could no longer undertake aught against them by reason of the good union and concord betwixt them, which this noble treaty of marriage would cement.'[1]

The chief object of the King of France in according his daughter's hand to an Austrian Prince was, as I have said, to secure an investiture of the Milanese, and within a few weeks of the signing of the treaty with the Archduke the Cardinal of Rouen took the road to Germany, to garner the fruits of the Royal diplomacy. Setting out on 25th September with a resplendent company of nobles and prelates and a large and imposing escort, d'Amboise reached Trent on 3rd October, and was received with a magnificence appropriate to his own state. When the negotiations began, however, it became apparent that Maximilian was not in a compliant mood, his view being that his son's bargain assured immediate advantages to France, and left to Austria nothing better than remote and doubtful hopes. Whilst assuring Louis' minister of his desire for peace, he sought to impose unacceptable conditions about the treatment of Ludovic and the Milanese exiles and generally to put obstacles in the way of an immediate grant of an investiture. After ten days of haggling something which might pass as a peace was patched up, and on 13th October a treaty was signed proclaiming eternal peace, friendship, and concord between Louis XII and Maximilian, and making provision for the inclusion of the Archduke and the Catholic sovereigns. The projected marriage between Charles and Claude was confirmed, and it was further agreed that Louis' heir, whether a son or other successor, should wed one of the Archduke's daughters. Louis undertook to aid Maximilian against the Turks, to further his journey to Rome, when he should go there for his coronation, to assist him in obtaining Hungary and Bohemia after the death of the ruling Hungarian sovereign, and to support the claims of Philip and Joanna as heirs

[1] Molinet, *Chroniques* (Buchon's Collection), vol. v, pp. 151–2.

of Ferdinand and Isabella. It was promised, further, that Ludovic's captivity should be made less rigorous, that Ascanio Sforza should be released, and that the Milanese exiles should be restored to the enjoyment of their possessions. Maximilian undertook to invest Louis with the Duchy of Milan in the approaching Diet at Frankfort, to aid him to enjoy peaceable possession thereof, and to use his best endeavours that the peace treaty should be confirmed and ratified by the Empire. Questions relative to the payment of a sum of 80,000 crowns by Louis to Maximilian were adjourned for future settlement. According to Guicciardini, there was also some discussion about proposals put forward by d'Amboise for a war upon Venice and for the summoning of a General Council to reform the Church in its head and its members, Maximilian pretending to concur in those proposals so as to buoy up the Cardinal of Rouen with the hope that after all he might end by becoming Pope.[1]

About the time when d'Amboise was striking this bargain at Trent, it was learnt in France that the Archduke purposed to visit Spain, and Louis lost no time in sending him a cordial invitation to journey thither through his dominions and to halt at his Court upon the way. In the pages of a contemporary chronicler there may be found an account of the discussion to which this invitation is supposed to have given rise in Philip's Council, and in that account are incorporated reports of the speeches alleged to have been delivered on the occasion by the Archbishop of Besançon, who advocated acceptance, and by the Prince of Chimay, who advised refusal. Produced at a time when historical writers were wont to embellish their pages with imaginary orations deemed appropriate to the circumstances, these reports cannot be regarded as accurate summaries of actual speeches; but the editor of the Austrian diplomatic papers for the period has pronounced them to be worthy of attention as expressing the points of view of the two parties which were always striving for the mastery in the Archducal Council; and his opinion will warrant their reproduction in these pages.

Leading the opposition to a closer *entente* with France, the

[1] Dumont, *Corps universel diplomatique*, vol. iv, part i, pp. 16–17; Dupuy, *Histoire de la réunion de la Bretagne à la France*, vol. ii, pp. 260–2; Guicciardini, *Storia d'Italia*, ed. Gherardi, vol. ii, pp. 26–7.

Prince of Chimay cautioned his master to be careful how he put himself in the power of the King of France, seeing that French Kings were always untrustworthy. Had they not for centuries past levied war on Flanders and Artois? Had there not been incessant strife between the Houses of Burgundy and Orleans—a strife embittered by acts of treachery and deeds of blood? Was it not true that the streets of Paris still ran with the blood of Orleanists, shed by Burgundian hands? Could such affronts be forgotten by a bold spirit like the King of France? These were grounds for deep mistrust, and to them must be added those which proceeded from the national character of the French, with their unbounded love of glory, their unquenchable thirst for conquest, their greed, their envy, admitting neither superiors nor equals, their treachery and contempt for treaties. These were the reasons why the speaker and his friends thought that the proposal of the King of France should be declined. He was followed by the Archbishop of Besançon, who stated the opposing view. 'The French', said this speaker, 'are no worse than others, for where may a monarchy or a republic be found which does not strive for an extension of empire or an increase in renown? Greed and ambition are ubiquitous, but sometimes they co-exist with noble *élans* and generous sentiments, and it is the weak, not the strong, who seek for revenge. It would be foolish to think that all French sovereigns are cast in the mould of Louis XI. In what has Louis XII wronged us? Can it be supposed that he would dare to put our Prince under duress, when in so doing he would soil his fair name with an ineffaceable blot and draw down upon his country the indignation of all Christian Princes? We all know the King of France; we all know in what manner he has conducted himself towards our Prince. Peace has come to us; the wounds of war are healing; its hatreds are dying down. Your fears are unworthy, and your apprehensions are belied by the magnanimous character of Louis XII, who is, perhaps, the best Prince to be found upon a throne to-day. No one detests hypocrisy, sharp practice, and deceit more cordially than he; and, as all the world is aware, he surrounds himself with men who are good and true. If he were vindictive, would he ever have said that a King of France does not remember the wrongs of a Duke of Orleans? But why

then, you will ask, is he so eager that the Archduke should visit France? The answer is plain. He hopes that by such a visit the union between the two Princes will be cemented, and he looks to secure the Archduke's support in his negotiations for the investiture of Milan.'[1]

Whatever may actually have been said at the Council-board, it is at all events certain that the Archbishop's arguments carried the day, and that Philip and his Archduchess resolved to visit France. Himself of a generous and confiding disposition, Philip had no fears for his safety, and, to impress the world with the reality of his new friendship, he entered Louis' dominions without asking for hostages. Louis received him in the spirit in which he came, and from the moment of setting foot on French territory at Saint-Quentin the Archducal pair were loaded with honours and overwhelmed with attentions. Travelling in leisurely fashion, and enjoying a triumphal progress by the way, they reached Blois on 7th December, and were there splendidly received by Louis and his Queen. All was courtesy and friendliness, compliment and rejoicing, and in the many ceremonies there was only once a hitch. This was when the time came for the infant Claude to be presented to her prospective mother-in-law. Claude was not yet of an age to be guided by reasons of State or to recognize the value of diplomatic hypocrisy. Finding that strange eyes were scrutinizing her and that she was dangled upon an unfamiliar knee, she yelled in disapproval, and refused to be appeased.[2]

Whilst the Royalties fraternized, their advisers grappled with the difficulties which had been shirked at Trent, where nothing definite had been decided about the treatment of the Sforza adherents or about the price to be paid for an investiture of Milan. In the atmosphere which prevailed at Blois an agreement was soon reached, and on 13th December articles of interpretation and declaration supplementary to the treaty of Trent were ready for signature. The articles provided that Louis should either have the investiture of Milan for 140,000 francs, being the equivalent of the sum

[1] Le Glay, *Négociations diplomatiques entre la France et l'Autriche*, vol. i, pp. l–lii.

[2] Le Glay, *op. cit.*, pp. li–lii; Le Roux de Lincy, *Vie de la Reine Anne de Bretagne*, vol. i, p. 216.

of 80,000 *écus d'or* mentioned in the treaty of Trent, or should be invested with Milan and guaranteed possession of the Valtelline at the price of 200,000 francs, the choice between the alternatives resting with Maximilian; the amnesty to Milanese exiles was modified so as to exclude persons who had rebelled against Louis after swearing fealty to him; and in the matter of the proposed marriage of Louis' successor to one of the Archduke's daughters it was stipulated that the French might select the bride within a period of six years, the Archduke within that period being at liberty to betroth his daughters after giving previous notice to the King of France.[1]

Meanwhile a distinguished French embassy was journeying to Germany, to receive the investiture which Maximilian had promised to confer in the Diet of Frankfort. But that capricious ruler already repented a bargain about which he had always been rather half-hearted, and from which he now desired to escape. The ambassadors were told to proceed to Mainz and to wait there for further instructions. They waited for a month, and, as no word was received from Maximilian, they then took upon themselves to go on unbidden to Frankfort. Reaching that city on 25th January 1502, they found there no Emperor and no sign of any Diet. They would have liked to mark their sense of the discourtesy of their reception by returning immediately to France; but they were strictly charged to obtain the investiture; and so, after entering a formal protest, they swallowed the affront, and requested that Maximilian would appoint some other place of meeting. They were then told to go on to Innsbruck, and to Innsbruck they accordingly went, reaching the place on 15th February. Instead of receiving them in person, the Emperor sent to tell them that there were difficulties in the way of giving Louis the investiture of the Duchy of Milan as stipulated at Trent. He alleged a formidable outcry by the banished Lombards, demanded the previous release of Ludovic Sforza, declared that the agreement recently signed at Blois ought to have been made, not with the Archduke, but with himself, and complained of the inadequacy of the subsidy which Louis had offered towards a Turkish war. For these reasons he claimed the right to modify his

[1] Dumont, *Corps universel diplomatique*, vol. iv, part i, p. 17.

own obligations under the treaty of Trent. He would give an investiture, but it must be limited to male issue, and it must be conferred, not publicly, in a Diet, but secretly, in a private audience. The ambassadors replied that the Emperor had promised a solemn public investiture, and it was to receive such an investiture that they had come; they had not been commissioned to negotiate some fresh agreement; and, if the Emperor were serious, they might as well go home. In reporting these developments to the Cardinal of Rouen, they wrote in a strain which revealed pretty clearly the contempt they felt for the inconstancy and caprice of the man with whom they had to deal and their indignation that they should have been detained for many weeks in Germany, when Maximilian might have disposed of their business in a quarter of an hour. In March, after a further period of fruitless waiting, they took their leave.

About this time the quarrel between French and Spaniards in Naples was coming to a head, and it occurred to Louis XII that it might be well to make a bid for the friendship of Henry Tudor, whom the recently constructed system of family alliances had left out in the cold. The death of Prince Arthur in April 1502 gave the opportunity, and with his condolences upon the sad event Louis combined a proposal that the new heir to the throne of England should wed the sister of the heir to the throne of France. The proposal was one which the King of England did not intend to accept, for he was already bent upon transferring the hand and the dowry of Princess Katharine to the dead Arthur's surviving brother; but it was necessary that the King of France should be answered ceremoniously, and an envoy was accordingly dispatched to his Court. The envoy reached Grenoble on 25th June, and on the following morning had an interview with Georges d'Amboise. The Cardinal began by offering his condolences upon the death of the Prince of Wales, and assured Henry's representative that the King and Queen of France had been as much grieved by his loss as if the young Prince had been their own son. He then proposed an arrangement by which Louis and Henry would guarantee each other mutual assistance. To this, however, the Englishman replied that the precaution was superfluous, the tranquillity of Louis' realm not being threatened, and peace in Henry's

having become secure since the execution of certain abettors of the rebel Edmund de la Pole. The subject of the proposed marriage between Prince Henry and Margaret of Angoulême was then broached by d'Amboise, but before the discussion had proceeded far, he broke it off with the words: 'However, let us go and dine, and when we have drunk our fill, we will go to the King, being then in better breath to talk to him.' To the King himself the envoy expressed his master's gratitude for his messages of sympathy and offers of aid, but in the matter of the proposed marriage explained that Henry and his Council felt a certain difficulty. The difficulty was this, that, although the lady's brother might some day succeed to the French throne, yet, as Louis and his Queen were still young, it was by no means impossible that a son might be born to them. If Prince Henry could have married the King's own daughter, the King of England would have been delighted; but as things were, he must decline the French proposal, having offers from Spain and from Hungary which had to be considered.[1]

When the Spanish Court heard of the French overtures to Henry VII, Isabella wrote in some alarm to the Duke of Estrada, who was charged with the negotiation of Katharine's second English alliance. She reminded him of French ambitions in Italy, and then continued: 'Now you must see how important it is to hurry on the marriage of the Princess of Wales, our daughter, with the Prince of Wales who now is. It is the more necessary, as it is said that the King of France desires the alliance for his daughter or for the sister of Monsieur d'Angoulême, and any delay might be dangerous. After you have settled the marriage question, tell the King of England about the hostile intentions of the King of France, and remind him that he is bound by treaty to assist in defending our possessions. If there should be a disposition in the King of England to recover Guienne and Normandy by uniting himself with us, and we with him, in that case the King of the Romans will also be on our side. Tell him he will never have such an opportunity of recovering his possessions. But do not speak of the matter at all without being first certified of our rupture with the King of France.'[2]

[1] *Letters and Papers, Richard III and Henry VII*, vol. ii, pp. 340–62.

[2] *Calendar of State Papers, Spanish*, vol. i, pp. 272–4 (abridged). Compare Ferdinand's letter of 1st September: *Ibid.*, pp. 286–9.

There followed the war in Naples, the Archduke's abortive attempt to reconcile the contending sovereigns by the treaty of Lyons, the refusal of Ferdinand to accept that solution, the defeat of Louis, the three years' truce between France and Spain, and the establishment of Ferdinand's dominion in southern Italy. The truce held out a hope that Ferdinand might in the end consent to ratify the treaty of Lyons, which he had previously rejected, and confirm the bargain which hinged upon Claude's marriage. The hope was short-lived, however, for when Ferdinand found himself in actual possession of Naples, he preferred his own immediate gain to his grandson's prospective and contingent advantage. Following a course which was not unusual with him, he took shelter behind a conscience of convenient sensitiveness, and informed Louis XII that he was uneasy about the claim of his kinsman, Federigo; instead of leaving Naples to their grandson he and Isabella were thinking of giving it back to Federigo, provided he would agree to a union between their niece and his heir. It may be superfluous to add that Federigo did not recover his kingdom, and that the talk about his restoration was merely a pretence. In the employment of such ruses Ferdinand was wholly without shame, and this may have been the time when, 'on hearing of a complaint made by Louis XII that he had cheated him once, Ferdinand promptly answered: "He lied, the drunkard! I cheated him three times".'[1]

The result was favourable to the *entente* between France and Austria, for Maximilian, annoyed by Ferdinand's self-seeking, veered round again to the Archduke's policy, and Louis, who had still to obtain his investiture, was ready to welcome his advances. On 22nd September 1504 three new treaties were signed at Blois. The first provided for an intimate union and indissoluble friendship between Maximilian, Philip, and Louis, who were to be 'one soul in three bodies', with the same friendships and the same enmities, and under a mutual obligation to render help and support. Maximilian promised that he would not challenge Louis' possession of Milan, and that he would eschew all hostile action against Louis' Italian allies, provided they should not refuse to render the obedience which they owed to the Em-

[1] Gairdner, *Henry the Seventh*, p. 199.

pire. Louis undertook that he would give no aid to rebels against the Emperor or the Empire, nor interfere either in Italy or elsewhere between Maximilian and his subjects; promised that Maximilian should be received with all honour, and furnished with all assistance, when he should traverse the Duchy of Milan or other territories belonging to Louis in Italy; pardoned the Sforza adherents, with certain named exceptions; and offered to make suitable provision for members of Ludovic's family, if they would go and live in France. Within three months from the date of the treaty Maximilian was to grant an investiture of the Duchy of Milan to Louis and his heirs male, and in default of heirs male then jointly to the King's eldest daughter and her spouse, the Duke of Luxemburg; and the King was to pay therefor the sum of 200,000 francs, as already agreed in the articles of interpretation supplementary to the treaty of Trent. Neither Louis nor Maximilian was to make a separate peace with the King of Spain, but liberty was reserved for that monarch to adhere to the treaty within four months upon condition of surrendering Naples, in which event Naples would be administered by the Archduke pending consummation of the marriage between Charles and Claude.

The second treaty provided guarantees for the accomplishment of this marriage and for payment of the price at which Louis had purchased the Austrian alliance. The Governor of Burgundy was to give security that in the event of the death of Louis without male heirs he would give up to Charles the Duchy of Burgundy, Mâcon, and Auxonne; and the Governors of Milan and of Asti, of Genoa, of Brittany, and of Blois were to pledge themselves that in the same event they would hand over those territories to Charles and Claude, as soon as their marriage should have taken place. Should the marriage be broken off by the fault of Louis or his Queen, then Burgundy, Milan, and Asti were still to go to Charles; and he and his father and grandfather renounced all claim to these territories in the event of the marriage falling through by any default of theirs. For further security and in token of his affection and goodwill the King of France made an immediate cession to Charles of his life-interest in the revenues of Artois, reserving the rights of the Crown. With the third treaty, which was secret, comprised

the Pope, and contained a project for a league against Venice, it will be more convenient to deal in a later page.[1]

After the signature of these treaties an embassy of unusual distinction, with the Cardinal of Rouen at its head, was sent to Germany to receive the long promised investiture of Milan, and in April 1505 at Hagenau Louis XII at last attained the end which he had proposed to himself in seeking an Austrian alliance. On 6th April Maximilian conferred the investiture of Milan, and on the following day Georges d'Amboise did homage for the Duchy in his master's name. The investiture took the form of an absolute grant in favour of Louis and his heirs male, with remainder in default to Claude and her husband, and nothing was said about the penal provision by which under the Blois treaties Louis was to be divested for a breach of contract in relation to Claude's marriage. This omission was, however, rectified in a document of 7th April, in which Maximilian declared that, if the marriage should be broken off by the King and Queen of France, then 'we revoke the investiture accorded to the King of France, and transfer it to Charles of Luxemburg and his descendants'. The authenticity of this document has been questioned by historians, who have suspected it of being a forgery concocted in the interests of the House of Austria. It is certainly strange that the very important provision should have been made supplemental to the main grant instead of being incorporated in it, as might have been expected. On the other hand, there is nothing in the declaration itself to excite suspicion, for it did no more than give effect to the engagements into which Louis had entered at Blois; and we shall find Philip invoking it against him within a brief space of time.[2]

The investiture by the Emperor and the rendering of homage by the Cardinal of Rouen were carried through with elaborate ceremonial, and we may obtain a momentary relief from the monotonous rehearsal of wearisome treaties by turning to the correspondence of a Venetian envoy and beholding the functions at Hagenau through his observant eyes. Vincenzo Quirino had lately been sent to represent the Doge and Senate at the Court of the Archduke, and,

[1] Dumont, *Corps universel diplomatique*, vol. iv, part i, pp. 55–7.
[2] Le Glay, *op. cit.*, vol. i, pp. lxv–lxix.

going in his company to Hagenau, he penned long descriptions for the Doge of all that was done there. He related first the formal reception of the French embassy by Maximilian, who awaited it in a handsomely appointed chamber, where he sat on a dais between his son, the Archduke, and the Elector of Treves. The Cardinal of Rouen, on entering the room, made a profound obeisance. The Emperor did not rise, but signed to him to be seated on a brocade-covered bench facing his own chair, and motioned the Archbishop of Paris and M. de Piennes, the other ambassadors, to another bench a short way off. The ambassadors then presented their credentials, and after these had been read, the Archbishop of Paris rose and delivered a lengthy speech. The gist of it was that the Most Christian King had always been well affectioned to the Emperor, with whom he had been on friendly terms in the days when he was still Duke of Orleans, and this friendship and affection he had ever desired to preserve and augment. In token of the love he bore him he had sent to His Majesty his *alter ego*, the Cardinal of Rouen, with other ambassadors, to confirm the peace and union between them founded upon the marriage of his daughter Claude with the Archduke's eldest son. After interpolating a lengthy panegyric of peace the Archbishop then went on to say that the Most Christian King desired to render unto God the things that were God's and unto Caesar the things that were Caesar's, and, being in possession of the Duchy of Milan and the County of Pavia, Imperial fiefs, he begged that His Majesty would be pleased to grant him the investiture thereof and accept him for a good and loyal vassal, offering, whenever His Majesty might undertake the expedition against the Infidel which he was known to have at heart, to go to his aid with men, with money, the sinews of war, and with his own person. This, said Quirino, was a summary of the speech; and the reply was that the matter would be considered, and an answer given on another occasion. Thereupon the Emperor rose, and called the Archduke and the Cardinal to his side; and the three remained in converse for the space of about an hour.[1]

[1] 'Die Depeschen des venetianischen Botschafters bei Erzherzog Philipp, 1505–1506', ed. C. R. von Höfler, in *Archiv für österreichische Geschichte*, vol. lxvi, pp. 61–2.

Next morning the diplomatic representatives at Hagenau were bidden to attend a Royal Mass, and Quirino went in the company of Maximilian and his son to the church of St. Francis. The aspect of the sacred edifice made it plain at a glance that a ceremony of unusual importance was to be enacted. On the right of the choir were seats upholstered in gold brocade for the Emperor and the Archduke, with others in black damask for the Princes of the Empire; on the left, and slightly to the front, was a seat in black velvet and cloth of gold for His Eminence of Rouen; there were also seats in black velvet for the ambassadors; and in the middle of the choir, to conform to the provisions of the Golden Bull, was a raised seat opposite the Imperial throne for the Elector of Treves. When Maximilian had seated himself, two Councillors approached with certain papers, and stayed for a space in consultation with him. They then went to visit the Cardinal of Rouen, and presently returning to the church, had more talk with the Emperor. After that the Mass began. About the time of the reading of the epistle the Cardinal entered with his suite, and when he reached the choir, the two Kings rose from their seats, advanced to meet him, and shook hands with him after the fashion of the country. After the Mass, which was sung with much solemnity, there being two choirs, one German and the other Burgundian, Their Majesties rose, and proceeded to the altar in company with the Cardinal and the French ambassadors, who were then addressed by a former Imperial Chancellor. They had expressed to His Majesty, he said, the Most Christian King's love and affection and his earnest desire for a confirmation of the peace and confederation made and sworn to at Blois. Out of the love he had always borne towards his friend and cousin, the Most Christian King, the Emperor was willing to confirm, approve, and swear to the peace, league, and union for the common benefit, defence, and preservation of their States; and he begged His Eminence there present to use his good offices with the Most Christian King that the peace should be firm, stable, and sincere, and should subsist during their joint lives. In his desire to please the Most Christian King he would be willing on the Sunday next ensuing to invest him with the Duchy of Milan together with its dependent Counties and to confirm him in the dominion

thereof, reserving to the Empire only that which by feudal law ought to be reserved. He trusted that this holy league might benefit, not themselves alone, but the whole of Christendom, and that it might promote the destruction of the accursed sect of Mohammed, a work in which he was persuaded that the Most Christian King would not fail to aid him with all his forces, as his ambassadors there present had solemnly promised on his behalf. The speech then came to an end, having contained no reference to the Pope and made no mention of Madame Claude and Prince Charles. The Archbishop of Paris replied; he was brief, and spoke in such low tones that few could hear him; but the gist of his remarks was an expression of thanks to Maximilian for his friendliness. The Kings and the ambassadors then drew near the altar, and in the presence of the whole assembly Maximilian and the Archduke took the oath, after it had been read aloud. Quirino understood that the French were dissatisfied with the form of the oath, since it was less binding than they could have wished.[1]

Whilst France and Austria were immersed in the consolidation of their new and strange friendship, an event of great importance had occurred in Spain, where towards the close of November 1504 death had deprived Ferdinand of his consort, Queen Isabella. The Queen left a will giving to her husband the administration of Castile, which constitutional usage would have assigned to her daughter, Joanna, and to that daughter's husband, the Archduke. With the approval of the people of Castile Philip at once claimed the Regency, and assumed the title of King. In this conflict of interests with his son-in-law, the Archduke, Ferdinand, who had never felt easy about the Franco-Austrian *entente*, realized that a situation in any case troublesome might become actually dangerous, if France and Austria should agree to undertake concerted action for the purpose of enforcing their respective claims in Naples and in Castile. He must therefore find a means of detaching Louis from his ally, and to achieve this end he must discover a solution of the problem presented by Louis' claims in Naples. It occurred to him that, if he were to offer marriage to a lady of the French Royal House, Louis would probably be willing to make over

[1] *Archiv für österreichische Geschichte*, vol. lxvi, pp. 63–4.

his Neapolitan claims as part of the dower of the bride. It happened fortunately for him that his desire for a *rapprochement* with the King of France synchronized with a decided change in the sentiments of that monarch. At Hagenau Louis had reaped the fruits of the Austrian alliance, and, now that Milan was safely his, he was beginning to look askance at the price at which that alliance had been bought. He knew that his subjects were gravely disturbed at the prospect of Claude's Austrian marriage, and he himself was awaking to its dangers with the loss of the hope that he might beget the son whose birth would render it innocuous. Those whose business lay with international politics knew or suspected these tendencies in the minds of the two sovereigns, and Isabella had not been long in the grave when the diplomatic world began to canvass the probability of an alliance between France and Spain.

In June 1505 Ferdinand himself sent a letter to his representative in London, from which any one familiar with his methods might have inferred that something new was in the wind, for the letter was a violent attack upon Philip. The Archduke, he complained, had repaid his love with ingratitude. He had insisted upon travelling through France at a time when that country was at war with Spain, and thereby had stiffened its resistance. He had seen Spain invaded, and the fortress of Salces attacked, without lifting a finger to render aid. When Ferdinand would have helped the Archduke and his father to reconquer Burgundy and recover Milan, the Archduke had said that he had no quarrel with France. Worse than that, he had actually made an alliance with that country, and the alliance had been highly inimical to Spanish interests. In spite of all this Ferdinand had renounced the title of King of Castile in favour of the Archduke and his consort, and had pressed them to come to Spain, after Isabella's death. Just in that moment of grief and sorrow the Archduke and his father concluded a new alliance with the King of France, declaring themselves to be the friends of his friends and the enemies of his enemies without any exception; in personal consultation with Louis' minister the Archduke consented to the insertion of clauses most prejudicial to Spain; and he used his influence with the Emperor to obtain for Louis an investiture of the Duchy of

Milan.[1] So wrote Ferdinand, piling up his catalogue of grievances. In another man the outburst might have meant little. Not so with Ferdinand, who did not use his diplomatic correspondence as a safety-valve for the emotions. In him it signified that he was preparing the ground for some new orientation of his policy.

A week or two later it was noticed at the French Court that a certain friar, who had come from Ferdinand to congratulate Louis on the peace, had been sent back to his master with every demonstration of good will. Perturbed by the gossip, and eager to discover the truth, the representative of Venice questioned d'Amboise, who answered evasively. On the very same day, however, the Cardinal volunteered a significant remark to the Prince of Bisignano: 'Keep up your spirits and be prepared for good news, for something is about to happen, with which you will be pleased.' As eager for authentic information as his Venetian colleague, the Florentine envoy, Francesco Pandolfini, determined that the wisest plan was to go straight to Louis XII himself, 'knowing', as he said, 'that the King's kind and liberal nature makes it easier to learn the truth from him'. In the course of conversation he spoke of an agreement with Spain as though it were an acknowledged fact, and recommended that the negotiations should be conducted secretly, lest it should be thwarted by those to whose interests it would be inimical. 'Your Majesty should consider', he said, 'how little the Venetians will relish such an agreement, and how strenuously they will strive to prevent it.' The King replied: 'That I can well believe; but they will not succeed.' The conversation satisfied Pandolfini that something was going on, but he could not be sure that the affair would be carried to a conclusion. His doubts were dispelled when he found out that the French were prepared to give up their claims in Naples, if the King of Spain would take a French wife. There were, indeed, persons about the Court who believed that Naples would again be divided, the Cardinal having been heard to declare that France could not agree to any but reasonable conditions and that the glory and power of the King of France would soon be greater than before. In spite of these remarks, however, Pandolfini believed that the

[1] *Calendar of State Papers, Spanish*, vol. i, pp. 355–6.

French were proceeding upon the basis of a total abandonment of their Neapolitan claims.[1]

After the summer had been spent in negotiation the bargain between Louis and Ferdinand was finally struck in a treaty signed at Blois on 12th October 1505, and was very much in the form which Pandolfini had anticipated. The Most Christian King and the Catholic King professed their resolve thenceforward to be 'as two souls in one and the same body', each the friend of the other's friends and the enemy of his enemies. Louis gave in marriage to his new ally his niece, Germaine de Foix, the beautiful daughter of his sister, Marie, by her marriage with the Viscount of Narbonne; and in consideration of the marriage he transferred to Germaine and her issue all his right and title to the kingdom of Naples, relinquishing the title of King of Sicily and Jerusalem, and waiving his objections to the grant of an investiture to Ferdinand. By way of compensation for his expenditure in the Regno he was to receive from Ferdinand an indemnity of one million gold ducats payable by ten annual instalments, and repayable in full should there be no issue of the intended marriage, and should Louis or his successors in that event desire to re-assert their Neapolitan claims. Mutual promises not to harbour rebels, a general amnesty, especially for Neapolitans who had espoused the French cause, the release of prisoners of war, and facilities for commercial intercourse were dealt with in other clauses of the compact.[2]

Thus King Ferdinand had got himself married again within a year of the death of the consort, whose loyal and intimate co-operation had been the mainstay of his career. As though the example were infectious, Henry Tudor, similarly bereaved, hastened after him into the Royal marriage mart in quest of a bride; and Quirino, the Venetian envoy, maliciously inquired of the Archduke whether it was necessary to conclude that, when once a man had been married, he could not get on without a wife. About the time when Ferdinand was first suspected of a desire to remarry in France the King of England also approached the French Government, reviving the earlier proposal for a marriage between the Prince

[1] Canestrini et Desjardins, *Négociations diplomatiques de la France avec la Toscane*, vol. ii, pp. 103–8.

[2] Dumont, *Corps universel diplomatique*, vol. iv, part i, pp. 72–4.

of Wales and Margaret of Angoulême, and combining with it a further proposal for his own union with Margaret's mother, Louise of Savoy. It was understood that the French Government were not disposed to regard these proposals favourably: Louise was reluctant, professing that she could not leave her son; the French were not willing to provide the dowry which the King of England was understood to require; they had hopes of Spain which would make his alliance less desirable; and, above all, since Margaret's brother was heir to the throne, there was an apprehension lest her marriage in England might supply the King of that country with pretexts in the future. A suggestion of Henry's that, if he could not have Louise, he might himself take the daughter, is supposed to have been rejected in decisive fashion by that precocious young lady. 'England', she is alleged to have said, 'is a far and strange country, and its King is something elderly for a bridegroom. If perchance my brother were to become King, I might then find a young, rich, and high-born husband without going over the sea to look for him.'[1] Whatever the truth of this story, it is at least certain that Henry's proposals were not entertained, and although negotiations were continued for a time, and there was even some talk of a meeting near Calais between the French and English sovereigns, the English envoy was finally dismissed 'with fair words and promises, but not with any concluded bargain'.[2]

For France at large the matrimonial projects of foreign rulers were of small account, when compared with an incident which had lately startled Louis' Court, and had since become the subject of eager discussion in castle and cottage throughout the land. That incident was the impeachment of Marshal de Gié upon a charge of high treason, and the excitement aroused by the prosecution of a man of Gié's eminent station was enhanced by the knowledge that a blow was being struck through him at the growing opposition to the Queen's Austrian policy, of which opposition he was the recognized chief. The crime laid to the Marshal's charge

[1] Jean d'Auton, *Chroniques de Louis XII*, ed. R. de Maulde, vol. iv, p. 30, note.

[2] Canestrini et Desjardins, *Négociations diplomatiques de la France avec la Toscane*, vol. ii, pp. 108, 126–7, 150–3.

was the planning of a *coup d'état* to take effect upon the death of the King, who had been ill; he was accused of preparing a carefully devised scheme for arresting the Queen, tearing up the Austrian treaties, and marrying Madame Claude to Francis of Angoulême. His trial constitutes the most famous domestic episode of the reign. Over and above its rather poignant personal appeal the case possesses considerable political and constitutional importance by reason of its attempted extension of the doctrine of high treason. In the domain of French legal theory there were at this time two divergent conceptions of this offence. Under the customary law, which prevailed in some districts, it was necessary to a charge of high treason that there should be definite acts of a rebellious or seditious nature, whereas in the stricter theory of the Roman law, from which the juridical system of other districts was derived, the crime was deemed to comprise all acts adjudged inimical to the principle of authority. Before the sixteenth century there had been little or no attempt to enforce the harsher doctrine of the Roman code, but the embrace of the law of treason was destined to become wider as the power of the Crown increased, and the impeachment of Gié was the first step in a process by which a weapon designed to be the shield of the State would be transformed into the bludgeon of irresponsible omnipotence.[1]

Save for Georges d'Amboise there was not a man in Louis XII's dominions who filled so great a place as Marshal de Gié, the soldier-statesman who had aided the Beaujeus to rule, helped to combat the feudal reaction, fought with Charles VIII in Italy, and saved the French army at Fornovo. Pierre de Rohan-Guéménée, Sieur de Gié, was a younger son in a family which was itself a younger branch of the illustrious Breton House of Rohan. Born in 1451, he had lost his father in childhood, and from the age of ten he had been brought up in Louis XI's Court by his maternal grandfather, Jean de Montauban, Admiral of France. He was a cousin through the Rohans of Alain, Sieur d'Albret, and of Charles, Count

[1] R. de Maulde-la-Clavière, *Procédures politiques du règne de Louis XII*, pp. ii–v. De Maulde, who publishes the *dossier*, with a long introduction, is the main authority for this famous case. Good accounts will also be found in A. Le Moyne de la Borderie's *Histoire de Bretagne*, vol. iv, and in A. Dupuy's *Histoire de la réunion de la Bretagne à la France*, vol. ii.

of Angoulême, whose mothers were daughters of that House, and through his own mother, Marie de Montauban, he inherited the Visconti blood which flowed also in the veins of Louis XII. Uniting prudence to courage and patience to energy, methodical and painstaking though clever and quick-witted, an able diplomat, a far-sighted politician, adroit in the Court, wise in the Council-chamber, reliable in the field, he had enjoyed the favour of three successive sovereigns, and for more than a quarter of a century had devoted himself unsparingly to the service of the Crown. In 1476, when he was little more than a boy, Louis XI had made him a Marshal of France, after conferring upon him the hand of Françoise de Penhoët, Viscountess of Fronsac, one of the richest heiresses in Brittany. When she had died, the favour of another sovereign had secured for him another prize, and through the intervention of Louis XII he and his son had carried off from amidst a press of suitors the two Armagnac sisters, who had been made co-heiresses to the vast possessions of their House by the bullet which had struck down the Duke of Nemours on the field of Cerignola. On the death of his cousin, the Count of Angoulême, he had found himself nominated as an executor in the will; and the King, making him the guardian of the dead Count's young son, Francis, entrusted to his experienced hands the task of bringing up the youthful Prince who might one day succeed to the throne. Gié entered upon this new duty with enthusiasm and with a full sense of its importance. Devoted to his charge, of whom he would speak affectionately as his 'little lord', he was frequently at Amboise, which the King had assigned as a residence for Louise of Savoy and her son. To secure the safety of the place he purchased the captaincy, installed a company of archers under a trusted officer called Ploret, and required of these men a special oath of fidelity to the young Francis and to himself. In these precautions against external dangers he was also guarding against a more insidious peril—a peril of which the King was as conscious as himself. Both were well acquainted with the character of Louise of Savoy; both knew her for the scheming, perfidious, and vindictive woman she was; and both were aware that they of his own household might become, albeit unwittingly, the worst enemies of the youthful Prince.

From the outset of their relations Louise disliked the intrusion of Gié in her domestic life, and resented the surveillance which he exercised over her household. As time went on, she came to fear and to detest the influence which he acquired over the mind of the boy whose character she aspired to mould unaided, and in whose affection she could brook no rival. In the madness of her maternal infatuation she hated the Marshal for his very merits, and the tender solicitude for the welfare of his charge, which should have been a passport to a mother's heart, served merely to evoke in her a jealous passion, which piled up the fires of her first hot anger. She looked for an insult in his every word, and saw an injury in all he did. She declared that her own servants were dismissed to make room for his creatures, and shrieked with fury when she could twist some indiscretion of theirs into the semblance of an affront. The memory of one such incident has been preserved. The young Francis slept in his mother's room, and it was a part of the daily routine at Amboise that Gié's lieutenant should call for him every morning, to escort him to Mass. One day, when the lieutenant was away on leave, the officer who was performing his duties found the Countess' chamber closed against him, and was informed that the young Count that morning would keep his room. With his orders to carry out, and not wholly free from a fear of being fooled, the officer put his shoulder to the door and broke it in. Out of this episode, in which the zeal of a subaltern had outrun his discretion, Louise made a fine tale for repetition to the King, bewailing the sad fate of a Royal lady whose privacy was invaded by the violence of hired desperadoes. Though petulant outbursts such as this might give him no great concern, her spitefulness found other outlets, which made Gié despair. The one great object of his policy was to perpetuate the union between France and Brittany, which he knew to be essential alike to the prosperity of the one and to the tranquillity of the other. In pursuit of his ideal he had always opposed the policy of the Austrian treaties, claiming in the name of national unity that the hand of the King's daughter should be bestowed upon his little lord. Even in this, Louise, in the blindness of her hatred, ran counter to his views. She professed to believe that Claude's constitutional delicacy formed an insuperable

bar to a marriage with her son, and pointed her arguments with grim references to the fate of Jeanne de France. In truth, her opposition was inspired by considerations that were wholly selfish, since they were based upon her hatred of Gié and her jealousy of Anne of Brittany. She would prefer that her son's crown should be stripped of its brightest jewels, provided that he wore it in subservience to herself, rather than see him rule in greatness and glory through a marriage made by the Marshal with a daughter of the Queen.

In Anne of Brittany, despite her relations with Louise, Gié had another enemy, little less spiteful and incomparably more dangerous. The Queen had long hated him as the renegade Breton who had placed his brain and his arm at the service of France, helping thereby to bring about the downfall of her Duchy, and then by his opposition to the Austrian marriage striving to prevent the restoration of its independence. He was aware of her hostility, but, thinking that he could count upon the King's favour, he refused to pay court to her, and turned a deaf ear to the counsel of friends who begged him to seek a reconciliation. He seems to have boasted that he could be sure of getting the King's ear, whenever Anne's back was turned, and even to have hinted that he need not fear a Queen, whose popularity was not what she fancied; and these incautious sallies, repeated by mischief-makers in the Royal closet, added an element of personal resentment to Anne's political animosity. Her views were shared by Georges d'Amboise, the all-powerful minister, who was jealous of the favour which Gié enjoyed with the King, saw in him a leader of the aristocratic opposition to his own rule, and thought uneasily of the changes to be looked for, when the crown should have descended to Gié's ward. Once already his place had been filled by the Marshal during his own absence from the realm, and he liked this the less that it had been filled with marked ability, Gié dealing firmly with simultaneous troubles in Milan, in Naples, and on the Pyrenees, and initiating an ambitious scheme of military reform, which aimed at the creation of a national infantry and the elimination of the costly and troublesome Swiss. D'Amboise had found this scheme actually in hand, when he came home from Rome in the autumn of 1503, and he had been obliged to exert all his influence to secure the

adverse vote in the Council which involved its abandonment. The episode impressed him with an unpleasant sense of the extent of Gié's influence and power, and his growing apprehension prompted him to join hands with the Queen in an attack upon the too prosperous Marshal. The two confederates knew that they would be supported by many who secretly envied Gié's power and wealth or resented his proud and haughty ways; and they were confident that at a suitable time they might rely upon d'Albret and other lesser fry to follow in the wake of more illustrious hatreds. Such were the circumstances in which the attack was launched against Marshal de Gié, whose real crimes were his foresight as a statesman and his courage as a servant of the Crown.

For so far as the grain can be winnowed from the chaff in the copious harvest of documents which make up the *dossier* of the case, it seems to be pretty clear that Gié fell an innocent victim to the spite of two angry women and the jealousy of an ambitious priest. What had actually happened was this. Persuaded that a marriage between Claude and Francis was essential to the glory of the Crown and the safety of the kingdom, Gié was horrified at the prospect opened up by the Austrian treaties, and dreaded the complications likely to ensue, if the King should die, while those treaties were still in force. That such an event was probable could be doubted by no one who knew as much as he knew about the state of the King's health. Already gouty and ailing, Louis had lately been attacked by the malady which had brought his mother's life to a premature close; and in January 1504 it had become doubtful whether he would ever rise from the bed upon which, under the stress of the bad news from Naples, he had turned his face to the wall to die. In this moment of anxiety Gié took the precautions which he conceived to be necessary in the interests of the heir to the throne. Ploret, his lieutenant at Amboise, was instructed to hold himself in readiness to take Francis to Angers in the event of the King's death, and there to await Gié's orders in the security of the grim feudal fortress which frowns upon the Loire. D'Albret was adjured to have his men ready to make the south secure in case of emergencies. The Seigneur de Segré, a relative of the Marshal, was sent to Amboise to warn Louise of the King's condition, for Gié, although he

would not stoop to court the Queen, persistently strove for a reconciliation with Louise in the interest of his little lord. He had already confided his hopes and fears to two Breton gentlemen, of the name of Pontbriand, whom he had placed in the Countess' household, and for one of whom, François de Pontbriand, he had obtained the captaincy of Loches, where Madame Claude was residing. Brantôme asserts that during the King's illness Anne of Brittany got together several boatloads of valuables for transport to Brittany, and that Gié stopped the vessels in the King's name. The story is not confirmed by the record of the trial, in which, had it been true, it must have figured conspicuously. Nor does that record support the Queen's allegation that she and her daughter were in danger of arrest at Gié's hands. It may be that in case of urgent necessity his courage and patriotism would not have flinched even from that perilous step; but, if he had ever faced the possibility, he had kept his own counsel; and there was nothing to incriminate him which any reasonable man could accept.

The King, whose life had been despaired of at Lyons, came back from the gates of death, and by March 1504 was once more in residence at his beloved Blois. There on the 22nd of the month he was approached by Pierre de Pontbriand, who craved permission to impart information of importance. Louis granted him an audience, but refused to listen, when he began to attack Gié. Egged on by Louise of Savoy, at whose instigation he was acting, Pontbriand two days later put himself in the King's way, as he walked in the grounds, and returned a second time to the attack. Once again Louis stopped him, telling him that, if he had more to say, he had better go and tell it to the Cardinal of Rouen. The informer took him at his word, and in the Cardinal's closet unmasked his guns: Gié had been heard to speak of his dislike of the Queen and of what he would do in the event of the King's death, affirming his intention to interfere, if the Queen should try to take Claude to Brittany, and, if necessary, to stop her by the use of force; he had often alleged that the King was in the habit of speaking most disparagingly of the Countess of Angoulême; and it could be proved that he had prepared to secure the person of the young Francis in the interest of his own ambition. The Cardinal listened, not, as

his master had done, impatiently and incredulously, but with attention and secret joy. He then summoned the Marshal to his presence, and interrogated him upon Pontbriand's accusations. Tears of anger and humiliation welled up in the old soldier's eyes—of anger that he should be attacked by a man whom he had trusted and befriended, of humiliation that he should be called upon to defend his honour against the aspersions of a fortune-hunting adventurer. Recovering his composure, he stoutly denied all the charges, and then went off to find the King and to denounce the whole affair to him as a plot contrived by his enemies. Louis heard him sympathetically, and assured him that he had listened to Pontbriand merely to get rid of the fellow. The affair seemed to be over; the Cardinal left for his diocese; and Pontbriand, attempting to re-open the subject with the King in the presence of some of the Queen's gentlemen, was curtly dismissed.

At this critical juncture, however, Gié made a mistake which was to cost him dear: instead of remaining at Court and keeping in touch with the King, he went off in dudgeon to the country, leaving his enemies in possession of the field. Nothing daunted by their previous failure, those enemies were waiting for an opportunity to pursue their vendetta, and a chance presented itself, when in June Olivier de Coëtmen, Grand Master of Brittany, one of Gié's intimate friends, left Blois hurriedly and without explanation. It was instantly put about that a guilty conscience was driving him to seek safety overseas, because he had had a hand in Gié's machinations; an order for his detention was issued; and Roland de Ploret, the Marshal's lieutenant at Amboise, was brought up for examination by the Chancellor. If only Gié had remained at Blois, all might yet have been well, for the King had disliked the business from the first. In the absence of Gié, however, he was yielding, though with reluctance, to the joint pressure of the Cardinal and the Queen. On 12th July orders were given that magistrates of the Parlement of Paris should conduct an inquiry at Amboise and at Loches; and although the inquiry was sterile, a further order on 24th July directed proceedings before the Grand Conseil, which was to be strengthened for the purpose by the addition of four magistrates of the Parlement.

When the proceedings before the Grand Conseil began, the charges against the accused were formulated by the Procureur-Général on behalf of the Crown. The Marshal, he said, by means of his position, connexions, military posts, and guardianship of the Count of Angoulême had traitorously designed to usurp the government of France, and had compassed the destruction of the King and Queen and their posterity. In the execution of this evil enterprise he had made advances to divers persons as well in foreign countries as in his own, and he had put about reports of the King's illness, expressing the hope that he might die. He had openly declared that he disliked the Queen, and would injure her if he could, saying that he did not fear her, or mind what she said or did; he had avowed that, if she should try to take her daughter to Brittany, he would prevent it; and to this end he had ordered his men at Tours, Amboise, Saumur, and Angers to occupy the bridges and passages and permit none to pass without his leave. The Queen, he had said, expected to be helped by her Breton subjects, by whom she supposed herself to be beloved, but of his own knowledge he could assert the contrary, and he would see to it that no help reached her. His design was to get the young Count of Angoulême into his power, and with this object he had sent guns to Amboise, exacted from his men there an oath of implicit obedience, and arranged for the young Count's secret removal to Angers and for the detention of the Countess, if she should offer opposition. He had often told the Countess that she must reckon with his determination to be the master, and had warned her that he could afford to ignore her sentiments in his assurance that he had but to command and the King's captains and men would obey. He had sought to intimidate her by telling her that she had an enemy in the Queen, and that he himself had got from the King a promise of support in any differences relating to her son's guardianship. These were his evil ends, and to achieve them he had conspired secretly with divers astute and crafty persons.[1]

The indictment was formidable, but it was not by any means certain that the Procureur-Général could substantiate his allegations by credible evidence. Louise of Savoy, the

[1] *Procédures politiques*, pp. 3–7.

Pontbriand brothers, and other witnesses had already been examined under the order of 12th July. Jean Grimaud, Seigneur de Procé, had deposed that he had served for five years in Gié's company, and had never heard anything to arouse suspicion. Pierre de Pontbriand had reiterated some of his previous statements, but had retracted others, explaining that he had thought things over more carefully; and his brother, François, had extricated himself rather deftly by saying that, if he had heard the Marshal say what he was supposed to have said, he would have lost no time in reporting the remarks to the King. Louise of Savoy had begun by admitting that, so far as she could recollect, Gié had never said a word to indicate any desire for the King's death. He had sent Segré to tell her of the King's illness at Lyons, but the message was for her private ear, and did not appear to possess any special significance. Gié had told her that the Queen did not like him, and had added that he was indifferent, because sure of the King's favour. 'Should anything happen to the King,' he had said, 'the Queen will want to go off and take her daughter with her; but people will take care to stop them.' She was sure that he meant by that that he himself would stop them, because this was how he always expressed himself, when announcing his own intentions. He had advised her to go and live at Loches, giving as his reason that the Queen could never get hold of the place, and explaining that it was at the instigation of the Queen that Amboise had been robbed of the guns which would have made it safe in the event of the King's death. He had warned her that she must be ready to go instantly to Angers in case of accident. When the time should come, he had said, he would look for the chief place under her son, whom none could help or hurt so much as he.[1]

There was not much here on which to found a charge of treason, for the evidence of Louise, though palpably hostile, amounted to nothing more than vague implications, and the dubious credibility of the Pontbriand brothers was further shaken by their retractations and subterfuges. The prosecution hoped to do better with the Sieur d'Albret, who had been summoned to testify against the Marshal. He had lately been Gié's rival in the race for possession of the Nemours

[1] *Procédures politiques*, pp. 7–9, 23–39.

inheritance, and his defeat in that contest was believed to have left him full of envy, malice, and all uncharitableness. His biographer declares that his hostile attitude was a pose deliberately adopted to discredit his own evidence, so that he might please the prosecution by testifying against the accused and yet contrive not to prejudice the defence. His leisurely movements did not suggest that the furies winged his feet or that any green-eyed monster bore him headlong on towards his prey. He was in the south when he received the summons, and made no haste to obey it. When at length he started, he soon broke off his journey upon the plea of illness; then set forward again, and again stopped. He tarried so long by the way that the prosecution, weary of waiting for him, at last sent a magistrate to find him and take his evidence on commission. He testified that Gié had spoken to him of the Queen's hostility, of his intention to prevent her return to Brittany in the event of the King's death, and of her mistaken notions about her popularity. Gié had then asked for his support, telling him that the King had promised him the Governorship of Guyenne, and declaring that, if he were to combine that office with his other civil and military posts, and were also to have d'Albret at his back, it would be impossible for any one to thwart his will.[1]

The evidence of the Seigneur de Segré, examined on 5th August, was wholly favourable to the accused. He had never heard Gié say that the King's life was in danger; nor had he heard him hint that his illness was bound to end fatally. He had been at Lyons during the preceding winter, when the King was ill; and the Marshal, learning that he was leaving for the north, had made him the bearer of a message for the Countess of Angoulême. To the best of his recollection the message was in the following terms: 'No doubt, there has been much talk of the King's illness. He has been dangerously ill, and is still emaciated; but, thank God, he is better now, and is able to walk about in his room or, when it is fine, on the terrace. In a week's time he will leave for Blois, and he hopes that he may recover his health in the air of his native place and become as fit as ever. No greater misfortune could befall the kingdom or your son than the loss of our good lord.' This, he believed, was the

[1] *Procédures politiques*, pp. 40–3.

substance of the message: in any case it was confidential and intended for her ear alone. Examined minutely on the other charges, he denied all knowledge of the matters alleged against Gié. Confronted later with François de Pontbriand, he adhered to his former evidence, but made the damaging revelation that he had been advised to modify it, if he should wish to win favour with Their Majesties and the Countess of Angoulême.[1]

Gié himself was summoned to appear before the Grand Conseil on 9th September, but was down with fever, and could not leave home. The examination of witnesses proceeded. Some of them could say nothing; some tendered hearsay evidence; some dealt with topics foreign to the treason charge. In the evidence of the others there was nothing to incriminate Gié, whilst there was much which tended directly to exonerate him. The Seneschal of Maine testified that he was an old comrade in arms of the Marshal, accustomed to receive his confidences, and never once had he heard him utter any of the remarks attributed to him by his accusers. Ploret, further examined, denied the charges point by point: so far from Segré announcing that the King was ill, he had said that the King was well and was coming to Blois; and as for the story about stopping the Queen on her way to Brittany, he had always maintained that this was a tissue of lies invented by Pierre de Pontbriand. Conscious of the weakness of their case, and casting round for some means of bolstering it up, the prosecution then attempted to import prejudice by dragging in the subject of Gié's scheme of military reorganization, and for that purpose brought before the tribunal Étienne Petit, the Treasury official who had collaborated with the Marshal in that undertaking. Petit deposed that he had searched old records for the purpose of establishing feudal liabilities: what he had done had been done by order of the King. So far from trying to secure posts in the new army for his friends and servants, Gié had instructed the witness to go through the lists of pensioners and select the men best fitted for commands. So far from trying to keep the matter secret, Gié had discussed his scheme in the presence of several seigneurs. Besides, Gié had the King's orders, and the instructions sent to the cap-

[1] *Procédures politiques*, pp. 44–50.

tains had been issued under an authority which the deponent had received from the King in person, after submitting the papers for his approval. The order that tenants of fiefs should disclose their liabilities in respect of the ban and re-ban the deponent also had from the King's own mouth. Touching the other charges he knew nothing which tended to incriminate the accused.[1]

In the meantime Gié himself had again been summoned to appear before the tribunal. When he appeared, he was subjected to a minute and humiliating interrogatory. The ordeal lasted for more than a week, and during that time he was confined to his lodgings and forbidden to communicate with his friends; nor was he permitted to avail himself of legal assistance. However, in his replies to the interrogatory and in two justificatory memorials addressed to the King he defended himself with energy and skill, recalling his many services to the Crown, denouncing the bias of his accusers, and denying everything except his knowledge of the Queen's dislike and his desire for a marriage between the King's daughter and the King's heir. He maintained that Pontbriand's story, upon which the charges against him were founded, was a fabrication, and suggested that Pontbriand had been instigated by the Countess of Angoulême, because she was angry with him for things he had done. Those things had been done by the King's orders, the nature of which, as they were secret, he could not reveal. Never had he said to any person whatsoever that the King was ill, and that the gravity of his condition was being kept secret: had he done so, it would have been base ingratitude in one upon whom the King had conferred so many benefits. It was true that he had consulted the doctors about the King's health, but he had done so merely to find out whether the King was in a fit state to be troubled with business. He had told Madame d'Angoulême that the King had been very ill at Lyons, but had added that he would recover at Blois: his object in sending her that information was to allay fears engendered by exaggerated rumours.

That he had ever schemed to obtain sovereign power, when the young Count of Angoulême should come to the throne, he utterly denied. Concerning the removal of the

[1] *Procédures politiques*, pp. 63–103.

young Count to Angers the facts were these. When the King was proposing to visit Italy, Madame d'Angoulême had expressed some apprehension about her son's safety, pointing out that the fortifications of Amboise were decayed, whilst its garrison consisted of a few archers, and suggesting that Madame de Bourbon or anybody else might easily come and seize him. He replied that, although he was answerable on his life for the Prince's safety, he felt no alarm, for his people would never allow Madame de Bourbon or any one else to get in; and, if ever Amboise should appear too dangerous, there was always Angers to go to. This he said merely to allay her fears, for he himself entertained no such suspicions of Madame de Bourbon. The mere fact that he never did take any special precautions at Amboise showed the absurdity of the charges which had been brought against him. That he had never given any orders for the removal of the young Prince to Angers might be established out of the mouths of the archers at Amboise, men who were not in his pay, but in the pay of the King himself. In so far as he had recommended persons for service about the Prince's person, he had done so at the Countess' request; and he had rejected a proposal, which had emanated from the Countess, that his son should sleep in the Prince's room.

Questioned upon d'Albret's allegations, he contended that his evidence was tainted by his notorious anger at the two Armagnac marriages. As for the Queen, he feared that she had been influenced against him by malicious persons. He had refrained from paying court to her in the belief that, so long as her unfortunate prejudice endured, his advances would cause her no pleasure. Was it likely that he would say that she was unpopular in Brittany, when her generosity to the lords of that province was unexampled, and not one of them was discontented? The Marshal de Rieux, for example, drew a pension of 10,000 *l.t.*, and that was not the kind of thing that set a man grumbling. It was true that he had discussed with Madame d'Angoulême the question of a marriage between her son and Madame Claude. He had long considered that that union would contribute materially to the prosperity and tranquillity of the kingdom, and he might quite possibly have said so, though he did not recollect it. Very probably, too, he had said that the Queen would have

to be induced to sanction the project. When the King made a treaty for a marriage between Madame Claude and the Archduke's son, he gave up his own project because of the possible consequences of a rupture with the King of the Romans, and he never again mentioned it to Madame d'Angoulême or to others. As regards a charge that he had employed on his own affairs persons in receipt of the King's pay, it was possible that some such persons had occasionally been employed by his subordinates without his knowledge; but others had been so employed in virtue of a privilege granted to him by Charles VIII. In all other respects he met with a flat denial the charges which had been brought against him.[1] To that denial he adhered when confronted with the chief witnesses for the prosecution, Pontbriand, Louise, and d'Albret. The unrelenting animosity with which Louise pursued him till the end is said to have drawn from him this mordant comment: 'Had I but served my God as I have served Madame, I should have little to answer for in the Day of Judgement.'[2]

How much cause for fear had he in that other judgement-day now at hand, in which so many powerful enemies would unite to demand his condemnation? The answer would depend upon the interpretation which the court might place upon the dubious results obtained by the prosecution in its remorseless investigation of every nook and corner in the spacious edifice of his fortunes. In a bitter and violent harangue, in which he dragged in the turbulent records of the Montaubans as evidence of Gié's criminal tendencies, and dwelt at length upon the alleged proofs of his conspiracy, the Procureur-Général demanded that he should be adjudged guilty of high treason and condemned to death with confiscation of all his goods. On 30th December the Grand Conseil pronounced its verdict. Repudiating the conception of the law of treason which had been pressed upon it by the Crown, it pronounced an interim decree which almost amounted to an acquittal: Gié was to be set at liberty provisionally, and further consideration of the case was to be adjourned for a period of three months.

[1] *Procédures politiques*, pp. 144–72.

[2] Brantôme tells of a captain 'qui disoit . . . souvent . . . "que s'il avoit faict autant de service à Dieu comme il avoit faict au roy, qu'il seroit au paradis, *visum visu* de luy"': *Œuvres*, vol. iv, p. 13.

This was a sharp rebuff for those who had set out to hunt the Marshal to his death, but his pursuers did not on that account desist from the chasé. On 14th March 1505, before the date for the adjourned hearing before the Grand Conseil had arrived, they induced the King to issue letters patent transferring the cause to the Parlement of Toulouse, a tribunal with a sinister reputation for severity, and administering the law of a *pays de droit écrit*, which was informed by the strict principles of the Roman code. Here there would be no repetition of the fiasco before the Grand Conseil, if the Queen could prevent it. She herself was in Brittany, so much engaged in collecting evidence against Gié as to ignore the King's request to her to return and the Cardinal's warnings that she had better do so, but not too busy to establish a special service of couriers to link up Brittany with Toulouse, or to fill that place with her agents, lawyers, and distributors of bribes. The consequences of all this activity made themselves felt when the case came on for hearing, for Gié then found himself in the position in which Jeanne de France had once stood; not a man at the Toulouse bar would accept the dangerous honour of a brief; and it was only when the court intervened with an express order that he was able to obtain legal representation.

His first act upon appearing before the new tribunal was to dispute its jurisdiction upon seven different grounds. When his objections had been overruled and the letters patent of 14th March enrolled, he applied for a supplementary inquiry, comprising an examination of the King. The commissioners to whom this delicate duty was entrusted were far from relishing their task. One was suddenly called away by an affair of extreme urgency. Another left hurriedly for an unknown destination. A third prayed that the Parlement would have him excused upon the rather conflicting pleas that he was incapacitated by illness and detained by important judicial duties. When this was the temper of the examiners, it would have been idle to look for much result. What precisely the result may have been, and, indeed, whether the King was in fact ever examined at all, will never now be known, since the documents have not been preserved.

For close upon a year the second trial dragged its slow length along, and then at last on 9th February 1506 the

judgement of the court was pronounced. Absolving him from all the more serious charges which had been brought against him, but convicting him of 'certain excesses and faults', the Parlement deposed Gié from the office of guardian to the Count of Angoulême, deprived him of his military commands, suspended him for a period of five years from the enjoyment of the dignity of a Marshal of France, directed that during the same period he should absent himself from the Court, and ordered repayment of a sum of 10,800 *l.t.* in respect of Royal troops improperly employed in his own service. Nothing being said as to costs, it fell to the Queen as a civil party to the proceedings to pay the costs of the prosecution, and those costs amounted to the not inconsiderable total of 31,450 *l.t.* It was a bill at which even a Queen might wince.

Gié retired to Le Verger, his country place, and lived there in seclusion until his death in 1513. 'He took for his emblem a hat with the motto: "À la bonne heure nous prit la pluie."'[1] The Clercs de la Basoche, the contemporary equivalent of the music-hall comedian, seized upon the cause to barb the shafts of their wit, and diverted Parisian audiences with a seemingly guileless tale about 'un mareschal qui avoit voulu ferrer une anne [âne], mais elle luy avoit donné un si grand coup de pied qu'elle l'avoit jetté hors de la cour, pardessus les murailles, jusque dedans le verger'. All was grist which came to the mill of the licensed jesters of the time, and Gié could not complain, if he and his misfortunes were touched by a wit which made fun of all the world. It is not upon a note of levity, however, that I should wish to bring to an end my account of a monstrous prosecution, which must arouse indignation in every generous mind; and I may close more fittingly by citing the verdict of the historian who edited the records of the trial. 'Marshal de Gié', says that authority, 'was more truly great under a disgrace unjustly incurred and worthily borne than in the most brilliant moments of a glorious career. Like many men in his own and other times, he had felt the allurement of power, and the excess of favours showered upon his head is a matter of which history, whilst recognizing his rare qualities, might have been called upon to take note. But his trial has purified

[1] Dupuy, *Histoire de la réunion de la Bretagne à la France*, vol. ii, p. 275.

his memory. When every detail of his life had been sifted, there remained only a record of purity, of greatness, and of devotion. He reorganized the armies of France; he defended her frontiers; he resolutely opposed all the sterile adventures of the age; above all, he was the great architect of the edifice of national unity, with which his name is inseparably linked.'[1]

Good may come out of evil, and France was to gain by Gié's misfortune. In focussing attention upon the question of Madame Claude's marriage the trial had quickened the opposition to the Blois treaties, the dangers of which grew greater and more manifest, as the years went by and brought no male heir to the King and Queen. The situation was aggravated by the unsatisfactory state of the King's health, and serious illness, reviving his dormant scruples, disposed him to give ear to the public outcry. He had been seriously ill on two occasions during the year 1504. In February 1505 he was again indisposed, and on the advice of the doctors, who recommended change of air, went with his wife and daughter to spend Easter at Blois. He seemed to rally in his native air, and at Easter all was gaiety and merriment at the Court. Before April was over, however, the King was ill again, and more dangerously than on any previous occasion. Exhausted by continual fever and severe sweatings, he could neither eat nor sleep, and his weakness grew, till he seemed to be sinking. The news spread abroad, and in spreading occasioned a popular ferment which demonstrated the greatness of his popularity. As his subjects flocked to the churches to pray for his recovery, the sovereign on his sick-bed thought of them and of the duty which he owed them to undo the fatal blunder that he had committed at the instigation of the Queen. On 31st May 1505, in the presence of the Chancellor and of his Secretary, Florimond Robertet, he made a will directing his daughter to marry Francis of Angoulême, and devising to her the whole Orleans heritage, including Blois, Asti, Genoa, and the Milanese; and in order that there might be no doubt of his intention, he expressly declared that the existing engagements with the Duke of Luxemburg were to be ignored. Those engagements, he explained, were contrary to his coronation oath, being prejudicial to the realm, and he had accordingly been absolved from

[1] R. de Maulde-la-Clavière, *Procédures politiques*, pp. cxxix–cxxxi.

observing them by the Cardinal of Rouen, the Apostolic Legate.

Louis did not die, perhaps for the reason alleged by his historiographer, that he had 'an entire trust in God and a sovereign will to get well, and these two things can bring men back from death to life'.[1] Those who in April had filled the churches to pray for his life returned in May to swell the huge processions which came to give thanks for his recovery. Francis of Angoulême had then come to Court, and talk of his marriage with Claude had already reached the ears of resident ambassadors. Though the immediate danger was past, the King's health continued to give rise to periodic anxiety, and formed a theme to which the representatives of foreign powers frequently recurred in their dispatches. In November the Florentine agent, Pandolfini, reported that the King had again been indisposed, and although the ailment was more or less trifling, yet 'with so feeble a constitution the smallest ailment is of moment'. In December Louis was more himself again, but did not get up till after dinner, received few visitors, and avoided all worry; and Pandolfini took occasion to repeat his recent warning that 'his constitution is thoroughly feeble and unsatisfactory, though, bar accidents, he should last for a year or two yet'.[2]

The change which came over Franco-Austrian relations at this time and as the consequence of these events is depicted in the interesting dispatches in which Vincenzo Quirino, the Venetian ambassador at Brussels, kept the Doge informed about affairs at the Archduke's Court. The noise of the Gié trial had reverberated throughout Europe, and amidst it the deafest ear had caught an echo of the clamour which the policy of the Blois treaties had aroused among the subjects of the French Crown. Already uneasy on that account, Philip grew uneasier still, when he heard of the moral effect produced by the King's illness, and began to suspect that Louis himself was tempted to yield to the popular outcry. These suspicions were deepened when he found that Louis was negotiating for an alliance with Ferdinand, with whom he himself was at loggerheads over Castile; and they

[1] Jean d'Auton, *Chroniques de Louis XII*, ed. R. de Maulde, vol. iv, p. 3.

[2] Canestrini et Desjardins, *Négociations diplomatiques de la France avec la Toscane*, vol. ii, p. 151.

amounted to a positive conviction, when Louis' own envoys began to hint at a rupture of Claude's engagement. By August 1505 the cordiality which had once marked the relations of Brussels with Blois had been supplanted by irritation and distrust. There was friction over the see of Tournai, lately become vacant, Philip disputing the regalian rights to which Louis laid claim as suzerain. There was friction over the jurisdiction of the Parlement of Paris in Artois, where according to Philip the population was being ruined by hordes of rapacious officials. It was true, as Quirino observed, that these were merely points of honour, but they caused bad feeling. Quirino, indeed, considered that they gave ground for apprehending a rupture, having regard to the national character of the French, 'whose nature it is to be courteous and accommodating, when they are the under dogs, and contrariwise insolent and haughty, when they fancy they are getting the best of it'.[1] It was known that all France, save for the Queen and the Cardinal, wanted to see Madame Claude married at home; it was believed that the solitary endeavour of Austria's two friends would be borne down by the weight of the opposition; and upon receipt of news of Ferdinand's impending marriage with Germaine it was assumed generally that Louis must be seeking to evade the onerous obligations that he had undertaken in his bargain with Austria. By the beginning of September the situation was grave enough to demand military precautions; Philip was sending troops, supplies, and guns to the frontier, having heard that the French were doing the same; and Maximilian, who had countermanded the departure of troops for Hungary, was calling upon the Empire to help him stand by his son.[2]

Though secretly contemplating a rupture of his daughter's engagement, Louis wished to avoid an open breach with the Archduke, and he and his Queen exerted themselves in the cause of peace. In a cordial letter to the Archduke he expressed regret for any unpleasantness occasioned by the send-

[1] 'Essendo natura de Francexi quando sono al desoto esser humil et humanissimj. et è contra superbi et alteri quando se vedeno su lo avantazo': *Archiv für österreichische Geschichte*, vol. lxvi, p. 145.

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 142–6, 149, 152; *Calendar of State Papers, Venetian*, vol. i, p. 302.

ing of his embassy; he had been obliged to send it against his will, to quiet the Parlement of Paris and the French Princes, who objected to his daughter taking a husband abroad; but his own sentiments were unchanged, and he had never thought of infringing the subsisting pact and union. The Queen received a messenger sent to her secretly by the Archduke, and gave him the still more encouraging message that, so far as lay in her power, she would see to it that no one but Duke Charles should have her child. This explicit assurance put new heart into the pro-French party in the Archducal Council, which had been perturbed by recent events. Its opponents, 'not being seduced by French gold', maintained that the pretence of friendliness was a fraud, and that sooner or later the Archduke would discover that he had been taken in. Maximilian in his heart took the same view, but clung to the hope of getting the 100,000 *écus* still due to him from the Most Christian King.[1]

The favourable impression produced by these messages was soon effaced by the news of the Franco-Spanish marriage alliance and by its visible effects upon Ferdinand's policy. He wrote to the Archduke in terms of uncompromising directness that he did not intend to give up the government of Castile, but meant to go on ruling that country, as he had done for many years, and as the late Queen intended that he should. Philip and Maximilian were both greatly put out that Ferdinand should have taken a wife in the French Royal House. The Emperor lectured the Spanish ambassador, telling him that the French were treacherous and would probably betray Ferdinand as they had already betrayed him and his son. The ambassador expressed astonishment that Maximilian should object to his master making peace with the King of France, who was the Emperor's friend and ally. Maximilian answered angrily that the King of France never had been his friend, and never would be; what he had done had been done to please his son, who had been led astray by wicked and treacherous advisers; and now he was afraid that it would all end in a war with France.[2]

Some three weeks later Quirino reported the arrival of

[1] *Archiv für österreichische Geschichte*, vol. lxvi, p. 153.
[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 155–6.

another French embassy at Brussels. 'An ambassador came from France the day before yesterday', he wrote on 28th September. 'He tells me that a lot of nonsense is being talked about his mission, and that he has come simply to notify Philip and Maximilian of the treaty with Spain. But from a friend I learn that this is not the whole of his message, for he was commissioned to say further that the Most Christian King, though for his own part still minded to keep his promises and to observe the peace, thinks it impossible to resist all the Princes in France, who will not hear of the marriage of Madame Claude to Duke Charles. The Government here has replied that, if the King of France desires to break off the marriage, they will offer no objection, provided that he observes the clause of the treaty of Hagenau which covers such an eventuality, and is couched in these terms: "And in the event of the said marriage not being concluded by reason of the default of the King of France or of the Queen, his wife, or of Madame Claude, the Most Christian King agrees and consents that the Duchies of Burgundy and Milan and the County of Asti shall belong and remain to the said Duke of Luxemburg, and in such a case hereby cedes and transfers the said territories together with all such right and title thereto as he may possess or acquire." If this be observed, the sovereigns here will be content, but they are afraid the French will quibble and argue that the marriage has gone off, not by the default of the King and Queen or their daughter, but by the action of the French Princes, and that no penalties attach to the King and Queen, because they still desire the marriage and would like it to go through.'[1]

A month later Philip was still full of his grievance that Louis should have made peace with the King of Spain without his knowledge, contrary to the terms of the agreement between them; but it was understood that he meant to put up with it without making a fuss, and Quirino thought that the relations between him and Louis, though not likely to be friendly, would remain peaceable. In fact, Philip's ambassadors were then in France, negotiating for a settlement of existing differences, and they were confident of success in view of the cordiality of their reception, the King's evident friendliness, and the support of the Queen. On 26th October

[1] *Archiv für österreichische Geschichte*, vol. lxvi, pp. 161–3.

they did actually sign an agreement. Philip gave way in the dispute about the see of Tournai, and acknowledged Louis' claim to regalian rights. He also gave way about certain unimportant questions of jurisdiction in Artois. The King of France, on his part, renewed his promises and protestations of friendship, excusing himself about the peace with Spain and about certain other matters by which the Archduke had felt himself aggrieved. It was clearly the wish of the Archduke that the recent past should be overlooked, and on the strength of this partial return to the old footing of friendship Louis sent one of his secretaries with a private message for Philip, who was being pressed by Ferdinand to go to Spain. Philip was exhorted to avoid the perils of the long journey, and to submit his difficulties with Ferdinand to the arbitration of the King of France, who expressed confidence in his ability to reach a settlement satisfactory to both parties. The Archduke answered that, if he were aware of any difficulties calling for mediation, he would welcome Louis' offer, but he knew of none. He could not postpone his journey to Spain: both Ferdinand and his own subjects in Castile had often asked him to go, and he ought to have gone already; besides, he had incurred great expense in preparation, and his intended departure had been publicly announced. When his ambassador returned from the French Court, he thought it fortunate that he should have declined Louis' invitation, for the envoy drew a picture of the French King which revived all his dormant fears. 'He has given such an account of the Most Christian King's hostile and treacherous disposition that the Archduke is greatly put out, and much regrets that he should ever have placed as much trust in him as he has. It was done against the advice of his father; it has displeased his father-in-law; and altogether it has done him little good.' [1]

The Austrian marriage project hung by a thread, and that thread was about to be severed. Not only did the popular feeling in France grow stronger and stronger; not only did the King perceive more and more clearly that such a marriage was incompatible with French interests; but now of the two advocates who alone had championed the Austrian cause, one had thrown up his brief. In April 1506 the Arch-

[1] *Ibid.*, pp. 168–74, 178; *Lettres du Roy Louis XII*, vol. i, pp. 34–41.

duke's representative in Rome wrote to warn his master that 'Cardinal d'Amboise is much changed in his attitude towards you, being now wholly given over to the King of Aragon, through whom he hopes one day to become Pope'.[1] With his defection and the King's change of view there was thus a unanimity of opinion in the French Government that Madame Claude's engagement to Duke Charles should be broken off; but it remained to be decided in what way the decision could be carried out with the smallest reflection upon Louis' honour and the least offence to Austrian pride. It was considered that appearances might be preserved, if Louis should seem to give way before an unmistakable manifestation of his subjects' will, and an assembly was summoned to meet at Tours, from which such a manifestation might be obtained. Princes of the Blood, prelates and seigneurs, and representatives of the Parlements, of the Universities, and of the good towns were bidden to attend, and, the general feeling being what it was, it was safe to assume that they would be glad enough to tender the advice which the Crown desired to receive.

In May 1506 the Notables assembled at Tours, and on the 14th, in the presence of Francis of Angoulême and other Princes of the Blood, of the Cardinals of Rouen and Narbonne, and of the Chancellor and other high officials, the King 'gave public audience to the deputies of the Estates of the Realm, who by the mouth of a Doctor of Paris, called Maître Thomas Bricot, informed my sovereign lord in the French tongue that they were come before him in all humility and reverence to declare certain things of great moment touching the welfare of his person, the profit of his kingdom, and the utility of all Christendom, to wit, that in the month of April of the year last past he had been grievously sick, whereat all his subjects had been sorely grieved, fearing to lose him and calling to mind his singular favours; how he had kept his kingdom and subjects in a peace so good that the like of it had never been seen in times past, for no man durst take aught without payment, and the very hens knew that they were safe from violence; how he had remitted to his people one quarter of the *tailles*; how he had reformed

[1] Le Glay, *Négociations diplomatiques entre la France et l'Autriche*, vol. i, p. 112.

justice in his kingdom, placing upright judges in the Parlement of Paris and in all other tribunals; and for these and other like reasons too numerous to rehearse he ought to be styled "Louis the Twelfth, the Father of his People". Thereupon the said Bricot and all the deputies of the said Estates knelt before him, and the said Bricot proceeded: "Sire, may it please Your Highness, we are come here to proffer a request for the general welfare of your kingdom, your humble subjects begging that it may please you to give your only daughter in marriage to Mister Francis here present, who is France's son", with many other fair words which brought tears to the eyes of the King and of all that heard them.'[1]

The Chancellor having replied that the King would consider the petition and give his answer upon a later occasion, Louis summoned his council and submitted for its consideration the request proffered by his subjects as affected by his treaty obligations to the Austrian Princes. The councillors were unanimously of opinion that a King of France was so deeply obliged by his coronation oath to pursue the good and welfare of his kingdom as to be incapable of becoming bound by subsequent promises tending in a contrary direction. They were satisfied that it would be dangerous to hand over Brittany and Milan, for even if it were possible to rely on the friendship of the present Emperor and his son, there were no means of telling what attitude would be adopted by their successors. For these reasons, then, it would be better for His Majesty to satisfy his conscience and comply with the request of his subjects than to keep his word to Austria and thereby put the realm in peril.

His path smoothed by this decision, the King went back to the Estates on 19th May, and by the mouth of the Chancellor informed them that their petition had been considered by the lords of the Council, and that he was advised, nay, entreated, to accede to it. The welfare of his people, the Chancellor went on to say, had always been the chief concern of the King, and after mature deliberation he had decided to comply with their wishes and sanction a marriage between Madame Claude, his daughter, and M. de Valois.

[1] *Lettres du Roy Louis XII*, vol. i, pp. 43–4. Bricot's actual phrase was 'Monsieur François icy présent, qui est tout françois'. My translation attempts to preserve the play upon words.

Not only so, but he also desired that the marriage should be celebrated without delay, and had resolved that the betrothal should take place at once. There had been talk in the past of another match for Madame Claude, but it had been no more than talk, and nothing had been settled which constituted an impediment to the marriage now in contemplation. And since all are mortal, and nothing is so certain as death, nor so uncertain as the hour of its coming, he was to add that, in case the King might die without leaving male issue, the deputies were to swear, for themselves and for the towns and cities they represented, to see that the said marriage was concluded and in such event to hold M. de Valois for their true King, Prince, and sovereign lord. When the Chancellor had concluded his speech, Bricot rose and in a few words of deep feeling gave expression to the popular enthusiasm: 'Lord, thou hast exalted the nation, and multiplied the joy. This is the day which the Lord hath made: we will rejoice and be glad in it.'[1]

Two days later, on Ascension Day, Thursday, 21st May, the Royal promises were fulfilled with solemn ceremonial. For the third time the King went in state to the hall of the Estates, and on this occasion he was accompanied, not only by the Princes and seigneurs, but also by the Queen, by Madame de Bourbon and Louise of Savoy, by the young Francis, and by Madame Claude. Francis was now a boy of twelve; Claude, aged seven and a half, was brought in by Madame de Foix. In the presence of the representatives of the nation the espousal of these two children was performed by the Cardinal of Rouen, and on the following day the marriage contract was signed with due formalities. It bore the signatures of the King and of all the chief persons in France and Brittany, and its execution was guaranteed by the oath of the good towns.

'Whatever others may do,' wrote the Archduke's ambassador, 'I take no pleasure in this marriage, . . . and I am told that the Queen is sorely vexed at what is going on.'[2] She might well be, for in that which was done amid the plaudits of a nation she might see the vindication of Gié and her own

[1] *Lettres du Roy Louis XII*, vol. i, pp. 45–7; Le Glay, *Négociations diplomatiques entre la France et l'Autriche*, vol. i, pp. lxxvii–lxxix.

[2] Le Glay, *Négociations diplomatiques*, vol. i, p. 142.

condemnation. To the last she had opposed her will to the will of her husband's subjects, demanding that Louis should remain true to his treaty engagements. But Louis on occasion could be as obstinate as she, and in this matter he was determined that she should dictate his policy no longer. He told her with good-humoured bluntness that he meant to mate his mice with rats from his own barn, and, when that failed to silence her, narrated a fable about a hind which was given horns, but had them taken away again, because it tried to use them against the stag.[1] The apologue was apposite, because, as Seyssel truly said of it, the project she was attempting to force upon the King 'would have delivered up to the foreigner the keys of the gates and fortresses of the kingdom'. 'If the daughter of Louis had married Charles V, as had been stipulated in four consecutive treaties, what might not have been the future of Europe? Maximilian at least had conceived the possibilities on so liberal a scale as to propose the abolition of the Salic law, so that his grandson might ascend the French throne and unite Western Europe under his sceptre. That dream was now shattered.'[2]

[1] Le Roux de Lincy, *Vie de la Reine Anne de Bretagne*, vol. i, pp. 222–3.

[2] H. A. L. Fisher, *History of England from the Accession of Henry VII to the Death of Henry VIII*, pp. 115–16.

XXI

THE REVOLT OF GENOA

Whilst Louis and his advisers had been engaged in this intricate play of diplomacy, their attention had also been occupied by the politics of Italy, in which a new factor was beginning to make itself felt. That factor was the personality of the new Pontiff, whom they themselves had helped to place upon St. Peter's throne, and with whom it may be well that we should seek a closer acquaintance. At the time of his election Julius II was sixty years of age, and the period was one in which men lived hard and aged prematurely; but in him physical and mental powers of no ordinary kind had kept old age at bay; his carriage and demeanour gave no indication of advancing years; and his restless activity was far removed from the creeping lethargy of decay. He had not entered upon his career with any of those advantages of birth and fortune which usually smoothed the way to high preferment, but for more than thirty years he had enjoyed the dignity of the Cardinalate and with it the opportunities of enrichment which presented themselves to the enterprising pluralist. Nor was it only in the matter of wealth that success had obliterated the traces of initial drawbacks, for none would have suspected a humble origin in this man of imposing mien, majestic manners, imperious temper, and princely ways. If there was a hint of the parvenu to be detected in him, it was in the lack of courtesy with which he would interrupt those who spoke with him and the brutal rudeness with which he would browbeat those who ventured to oppose; but in him these defects proceeded in the main from violence of temper and impatience of mind. Whatsoever their origin, they were characteristics with which all who had business with him must reckon, and even the representatives of Princes trembled in his volcanic presence. 'Act so that the Pope's ambassador may have cause to tell him of your good will', was the advice given to the Archduke by his envoy at the Papal Court, 'for this Pope thinks much of his glory and reputation, and greatly values such attentions. He is terribly choleric, and those find it difficult to get on with him who have not the patience to let him talk

and conduct the conversation in his own way; but he is amiable enough towards those who are willing and able to humour him.'[1] Impetuous, passionate, and self-willed, he was also frank, open, and sincere, and there was nothing about him that was selfish or petty or mean. The strict economy which he exercised in his personal expenditure was inspired, not by any spirit of niggardliness or parsimony, nor by the love of money for its own sake, for he knew how to spend with a lavish hand, but by his knowledge that the Papal coffers were empty, and must be replenished before he could execute his designs. Though some of his financial expedients were dubious, it was to his credit that he inaugurated a sound system of administration in the Papal States, and insisted upon the maintenance of order in every place which acknowledged his authority. His most strongly marked characteristics were pride and ambition, a daemonic energy, magnificence of ideas, strength of will, and indomitable courage and determination. 'He had all the princely qualities: patience in design and rapidity in decision, a singular mixture of impetuosity and finesse, of supple craft and brutal energy, a feverish and fiery nature which was proof against suffering, danger, and change of luck, and which, though it would brook no opposition, knew how to bend before a will that nothing could break.'[2]

Julius mounted the throne with immense but well-defined ambitions: his aim was to re-create the temporal power of the Papacy and establish on new foundations the tottering edifice of its spiritual authority. History affords few more striking examples of a man pre-eminently fitted to carry out a great work appearing in the moment most opportune for its accomplishment. His age was an era of political change: the powers of modern Europe were constituting themselves; centralization was in the air; monarchy was in the ascendant. Whilst thus in harmony with the spirit which was abroad in Europe at large, the designs of Julius were also favoured by the conditions which recent events had produced in Italy itself. Under earlier Pontiffs the constitution of the States of the Church had been thwarted by a ring of Italian powers,

[1] Le Glay, *Négociations diplomatiques entre la France et l'Autriche*, vol. i, p. 123.

[2] Imbart de la Tour, *Les Origines de la Réforme*, vol. ii, p. 53.

whose watchful jealousy had ever been alert to prevent the rise of a neighbour more powerful than themselves. That ring had perished in the fires of foreign invasion, and Venice alone remained to dispute the Papal claim to the hegemony of Italy. It was true that new dangers were created for the Papacy by the proximity of the foreigner, but those dangers were less immediate than the old, and in the meanwhile the situation presented opportunities of which a clever Pope might hope to avail himself. The powerful foreign ruler would not take alarm, if a Pope should aspire to create a second-rate Principality in the States of the Church, and might even be used as an instrument for the furtherance of Papal plans by a Pontiff who should know how to play adroitly upon his hopes or his fears, his jealousy, his gratitude, or his greed. Then, when the States of the Church were reconstituted, when the temporal power was restored, it would be time to consider the foreign menace and to drive out the invader with the arms which he had helped to forge. When that time should come, the Pope might avail himself of the changed conditions of the peninsula to enlist Italian sentiment on his side, and where a Sixtus IV or an Alexander VI had been dreaded as the enemy of Italian freedom, a Julius might hope to stand forth as the divinely commissioned champion of liberation.

This was a dream of the future, however, and the salvation of the temporal power was the immediate and pressing need. 'Of one thing I am certain,' wrote an ambassador from Rome, when Julius was settling down upon the throne, 'that the Pope, both as Pope and as Cardinal, has had the singular virtue that he has never suffered or tolerated any alienation of the property of the Church, but has always protected that property with the utmost vigour.' [1] It was in this that he differed from his immediate predecessors, who had aimed, as he did, at the reconstitution of the Papal States, but who had resorted to nepotism as the expedient most apt for their purpose. Julius perceived the weakness of that system, for he had grasped the difference between an hereditary monarchy and an elective theocracy; he saw that a Pope's relatives, enriched with Church possessions, were the natural

[1] Le Glay, *Négociations diplomatiques entre la France et l'Autriche*, vol. i, p. 121.

enemies of that Pope's successor; and his own difficulties with Cesare Borgia were a warning to him not to repeat a mistake, towards which he had small inclination. It was not with any thought for the fortunes of his family that he meant to recover the lost possessions of the Church and restore her vanished authority. He had no desire to enrich his relatives. His aim was to aggrandize his office, and, by making the Papacy rich and strong and free, to reinvest it with the supreme authority which it had once enjoyed alike in the temporal and in the spiritual spheres.

In the prosecution of such designs there were those with whom Julius would find it hard to avoid coming into conflict; there was Cesare Borgia, for whom his predecessor had created a Principality out of Church lands; there were the Venetians, who designed to bring Romagna under their power; and there were the French, who were the protectors of the one and the allies of the other: and it was an awkward circumstance that Julius owed his election mainly to the support which these three had given him. It was not Julius' way, however, to permit any sentiment of gratitude to hamper him in his political conduct, for unlike Louis XII, who had said that a King of France should not remember the wrongs suffered by a Duke of Orleans, Julius II considered that a Pope should not be influenced by the benefits conferred upon a Cardinal of San Piero in Vincola. With the French he tried to remain on friendly terms, paying much attention to the Cardinal of Rouen and endeavouring to placate him by adding to the Legation of France, which had been conferred on him by Alexander VI, the Legation of Avignon, which he himself had held before becoming Pope. With Cesare, with whom he had entered into certain engagements when bidding for his support, he thought it best to temporize, not being prepared to fulfil his obligations, and yet being restrained by them from overt acts of hostility. There remained Venice, and it was from that ambitious Republic that the chief dangers were to be apprehended. Venice had long been set on the acquisition of a land empire, her purpose being to combine the control of the Italian with the possession of the Dalmatian coast of the Adriatic Sea. She had acquired Cervia and Ravenna many years before, and more recently

had become possessed of the Neapolitan harbours which she had taken over during Charles VIII's invasion as security for money advanced to the Aragonese Government. Her next object was the acquisition of Romagna, and there she had been met by the rival ambition of the Borgias. Her relations with them had in consequence been far from friendly, and events had been moving towards a conflict, when Alexander VI died.[1] It was not difficult to conjecture how Cesare's fortunes might be influenced by that event, or what might be the fate of his defenceless possessions. 'These things', as Sanuto recorded,[2] 'induced in the Signory also a desire not to go to sleep, but to occupy certain places in Romagna belonging to the said Valentinois.' The policy here indicated was pursued steadily during the brief reign of Pius, who was powerless to resist; in a few weeks Venice by force or negotiation secured Fano, Montefiore, and other places; and at the time of Pius' death the Signory were considering proposals for the cession of Bertinoro, Faenza, and Rimini. There were some in the Senate who realized the dangers of the policy to which the Republic was thus committing itself, but they were few, and Venice as a whole shared the opinion of the Doge, who thought that Providence had intervened to regulate events for the best, and in that belief thanked God and took courage.

The situation in Romagna deteriorated rapidly when it became known there that Cesare had fled to the Castle of Sant' Angelo and that his men had dispersed. Cesena returned to the Church. Imola hesitated whether it should follow that course or give itself to its old lords, the Riarii. Forlì called in Antonio Ordelaffi; Giovanni Sforza returned to Pesaro; Astorre Manfredi was summoned to Faenza; and Rimini offered itself to Pandolfo Malatesta. The prevalent confusion was rich in opportunities for the watchful Venetians. At Rimini Malatesta soon saw that he would not be able to maintain himself, and approached the Signory with an offer to cede the town. From Faenza, where Cesare's lieutenant resented the action of the citizens in summoning Manfredi, came a message asking for Venetian troops. These events greatly concerned Julius, who behaved with marked

[1] Reumont, *Geschichte der Stadt Rom*, vol. iii, part ii, p. 11.
[2] Sanuto, *I Diarii*, vol. v, col. 70.

self-restraint, endeavouring to attain by diplomacy the ends which he knew that he was not as yet in a position to reach by force. He sent for the Venetian ambassador, and said to him that the Signory had always befriended him in old days, and but now had helped to make him Pope. He had hoped that they would likewise have helped him to occupy his new position honourably, but he heard on all sides that they were seizing places in Romagna which belonged to the Church, and he was constantly being told that, if he did not mean to become a mere Venetian, he ought not to tolerate it. He was ready to allow, he went on, that in what they were doing against Cesare the Signory were doing well, for his own opinion was that Cesare ought not to be left with a single place in Italy which he could call his own. 'Let people say what they like; he will never receive any countenance from me. I beg the Signory to give me their aid in recovering the property of the Church.' The ambassador answered that the Pope might regard as his own, not only all that Venice might have taken from Cesare, but also all its own possessions in Romagna; told him that he ought to show friendly feeling towards Venice; and cautioned him against listening to those who were always calumniating the illustrious Republic. 'Mr. Ambassador,' the Pope replied, 'do not doubt that I shall always be as an immovable rock towards the Signory. If anything be said to me against Venice, I will not believe it, but will tell you of it; nor shall I mind being called a Venetian, if in time of need I can show to the Signory that I am a Venetian indeed. Yet for my honour's sake I desire that the properties of the Church may be restored to her, that is to say, that all properties held immediately of the Church may be restored, and that those held mediately may once more be placed under their former Vicars. You must request the Signory to assist me in effecting my purpose.'[1]

The appeal had no effect, and Machiavelli, who was in Rome at the time, presently reported to his Government that the Pope's attitude was believed to be hardening. 'Everything points to this Pope having quite made up his mind to save these places for the Church; nor will there be any lack of people to encourage him in that resolve. . . . I understand that he has complained bitterly to their

[1] *Ibid.*, col. 324.

ambassador of the proceedings of the Venetians, saying that he could never have believed that they would be so little sensible of all the benefits he had conferred on their country as to try to dishonour and dismember the Church during his Pontificate, declaring that, if they were to adhere to their intention, he would throw off every bond of friendship, since he would rather risk utter ruin than suffer the Church to be so ill-used, and threatening that, if necessary, he would call upon the whole world to come to his aid against them.' [1]

A few days later Machiavelli's Government sent him news of the Venetian acquisition of Faenza, with a report of the terms upon which the cession was believed to have been negotiated. Machiavelli took the correspondence to the Cardinal of Volterra, and then went to show it to the Cardinal of Rouen. The dispatches indicated a suspicion in the minds of the Florentine Government that Venice was pursuing her enterprises in Romagna with the consent of the Pope. The Cardinal of Volterra, who said that he had discussed the matter with the Cardinal of Rouen on several occasions, admitted that he had himself cherished some such suspicion in view of the Pope's slowness to take remedial action; but it was difficult to maintain such a view after mentioning the subject to the Pope and seeing the depth of his resentment. The Emperor's ambassador was present when Machiavelli took the correspondence to d'Amboise. Both of them evinced much vexation, and violently abused the Venetians, saying that this move of theirs might be their ruin. 'And, in truth,' Machiavelli wrote, 'they are generally detested in Rome, so that one may look to see them get some nasty knock, if a suitable occasion should occur, for every one cries out against them. . . . The upshot is a conviction that their action at Faenza will either open the door to a conquest of all Italy or will be their ruin. . . . I then betook myself to His Holiness. . . . As on previous occasions, he declared that he had no intention of putting up with such an injury to the Church, and that, if the Venetians did not desist from their courses and give back what they had taken, he would join with France and the Emperor, and devote his whole energies to the destruction of the Republic.' [2]

[1] Machiavelli, *Opere*, vol. iv, p. 369.
[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 404–6.

Summoned by the Pope to release her hold on Faenza, Venice replied that the Church could have no claim to the place, seeing that it had been granted in full ownership to Cesare, and had never within human memory been possessed by the Church; the annual tribute paid by its Vicars, to which alone the Church was entitled, Venice would continue to pay; for she had no wish to injure the Church, to whom she desired to give all reverence and support. 'Mr. Ambassador', said Julius to the bearer of this message, 'I am going to speak frankly. You come to me with fair words, but your Signory does ill deeds. My Legate in Venice informs me that the Venetian troops in Romagna have not been withdrawn; others tell me that Venice has dealings with Cesena; and she has taken Sant' Arcangelo, which belongs to the Church, and Montefiore, and Porto Cesenaticho. I cannot go to war, for I have neither the money nor the men. I must complain to the Princes of Christendom, and I must invoke the aid of Heaven, which should hear me, for my quarrel is in its behalf. If the Signory will restore my places, I will be their good friend, as always before, and will do more for them than for any other power in the world. But do not for one moment suppose that I will ever agree to their keeping what they have filched from the Church. Happen what may, I will never do that.' For the sake of recovering the property of the Church, he told the Duke of Urbino, he was ready to become the slave of France, of Spain, of Germany, and, indeed, of all the world.[1]

In January 1504 the Pope declared in a bull that it was his duty to recover the territories of the Church, and that the duty was one which he meant to discharge. He then carried out his threat by turning to the European powers and opening negotiations in France and the Empire for a coalition against the Republic of St. Mark. The seed he scattered fell on fertile soil, for it was not in Italy alone that men envied the prosperity of Venice, feared her might, and coveted her wealth. Maximilian lived in a state of chronic annoyance with the proud and prosperous Republic, infuriated by its detention of places to which he had Imperial or dynastic claims. In France the feeling towards Venice, which had long ceased to be friendly, had been rendered actively hostile

[1] Sanuto, *I Diarii*, vol. v, col. 621; Giustinian, *Dispacci*, vol. iii, pp. 10, 66.

by the Venetian attitude during the war in Naples, as evidenced by such incidents as the loss of Prégent's galleys at Otranto. Louis was aware that the Signory resented his influence in Italy, believed that they had laboured covertly to frustrate his Austrian policy, and repented of the bargain which had stripped Milan of the Ghiara d'Adda to purchase Venetian assistance. As long ago as the previous November Louis had begun to complain to the Venetian ambassador of the policy which the Signory were pursuing in Romagna, and had warned him that, if they were to take places which belonged to the Church, they would incur the enmity, not of the Pope alone, but of the Emperor, the Catholic sovereigns, and all Italy. Even he himself, he had said, reluctant as he would be to do it by reason of the alliance, would be obliged to give to the Church such aid as his predecessors had been ever wont to render. Let Venice give up the Church territories, and not constrain him to a rupture of the alliance. Venice was the first power with which he had allied himself after his accession, and it would grieve him, if he were now to find himself so situated that he must join hands with the Germans to secure her destruction. 'Do your best with the Signory', he proceeded 'to prevent any such thing coming to pass. I was born a gentleman, and a gentleman I wish to die; therefore I will not break the alliance without first giving you warning. I think more of Venice than of any other power. I am not for Florence or for Valentinois, about whom I care little, but for the Church. I would rather see Venice in occupation of the whole of Italy than have the Emperor take an inch of it; and I realize full well that, if Venice were ruined by the Germans, it would be my turn next.' [1]

Not long afterwards Niccolò Valori, the Florentine envoy, reported a conversation with a French diplomatic agent, which threw further light on French feeling and on the dangers which threatened the Signory. 'Being aware that Monseigneur de Trans, lately ambassador in Rome, had returned to the Court,' he wrote on 13th February 1504, 'and hearing that he was keeping his room on account of some indisposition, I went to visit him with a view to learning something about the Pope and the state of affairs in Italy,

[1] Sanuto, *I Diarii*, vol. v, cols. 517–18.

and also for the purpose of showing a politeness by which, as it seemed, I could not be a loser. He appeared to be much gratified that I should call upon him, and discoursed to me about Italian affairs at great length and, as I judged, with much intelligence. The situation, he said, was now such that every one might make himself safe against the Venetian menace, whereas, if the opportunity were allowed to slip by, and some Prince should chance to die, there would be a danger of finding Venice less accommodating. He went on to explain how suitably and easily the thing could be done. In the first place, he said, the Spaniards, who had objected to sharing Naples with the King of France, are not likely to desire the presence in it of any one else. Then the Pope must wish to regain what is his and to avenge the Church for insults old and new. In like manner, the Emperor must desire to get a footing in Italy at the expense of Venice and recover that which the Republic has taken from the Empire. In this the King of France ought readily to concur, not so much for the purpose of restoring to the Duchy of Milan its lost provinces, as to make himself secure against the might and malignity of the Republic. Even if those two motives should have no weight with him, he ought to be influenced by the general satisfaction which would be caused in his kingdom, for, as he well knows, a war with Venice would be popular with all classes of his subjects.' [1]

It was in these circumstances that a secret treaty against Venice was included among the instruments negotiated at Blois in September 1504. The treaty recited that the Pope had often requested that Maximilian and Louis as good sons of the Church would assist him in recovering the territories of the Church which had been sacrilegiously occupied by the Venetians, and that in duty to the Pope and by reason of things done by Venice to their own detriment the two sovereigns were willing to comply. It was then provided that the Pope, the Emperor, and the King of France should without delay, and at latest before the following May, proceed to the recovery by arms of that which was detained by the Venetians, and should not desist, until the Holy See should have recovered Ravenna, Cervia, Faenza, and Rimini, Maximilian should have recovered Roveredo, Verona, Padua, Vicenza,

[1] Machiavelli, *Opere*, vol. v, pp. 52–3.

and Treviso, and Louis should have recovered what had been taken from Milan, namely, Brescia, Crema, Bergamo, the Cremonese, and the Ghiara d'Adda. During the war each of the three armies was to go to the aid of the others, if required so to do, and, when one should have achieved its object, it was to assist the others, until Venice should have been compelled to make complete restitution. It was provided, further, that, subject to the approval of the Pope, the Emperor, and the King of France, it should be open to the Duke of Ferrara, the Marquis of Mantua, and the Republic of Florence to join the League for the purpose of recovering such territories as belonged to them respectively; it was agreed that the King of Hungary should be urged to come in for the purpose of making good his losses; and it was stipulated that no belligerent should make a separate peace with Venice.[1]

The Blois treaties, as we have seen, were soon followed by the change in French policy which resulted in the negotiation of Germaine's marriage to Ferdinand of Spain and the rupture of Claude's betrothal to the Archduke's son, and as a result of the consequent estrangement between Maximilian and Louis XII nothing was done to give effect to the compact of spoliation. Venice, however, found out what had been planned, and in alarm tried to placate the Pope by a voluntary cession of some of the disputed territories in Romagna. As she retained her hold on the most important, including Rimini and Faenza, her concessions did not put an end to her quarrel with Julius, and Julius felt himself aggrieved that he should have been deserted by those who had solemnly undertaken to come to his aid. On the other hand, his own action in making a separate agreement with Venice and obtaining partial restitution from her, whilst his confederates got nothing, provoked the wrath of Louis and Maximilian, and when the French and the Austrians met at Hagenau in April 1505, Quirino heard bitter things said, not only about Venice, but about the Pope as well. The French and the Germans, he reported, wanted to summon a Council against His Holiness, saying that he was condemned by all the world, even by his own ambassadors; and they declared that it was essential, not only to reform the Church, but also

[1] Dumont, *Corps universel diplomatique*, vol. iv, part i, pp. 58–9.

to clip the wings of the Signory, which was perpetually prowling around on the watch to occupy places which did not belong to it.[1]

The temper of the King of France, thus ruffled, was not improved by the Pope's transparent indifference to his interests and unconcealed disregard of his feelings. Benefices in the Milanese rendered vacant by the death of Ascanio Sforza were disposed of by Julius without reference to the wishes of Louis; and when new Cardinals were promoted, they did not include the French prelates for whom Louis had requested the honour of the red hat. Fuel was added to the flame when the Cardinal of San Severino, writing to his brother at the French Court, spoke of the Pope's dislike of Georges d'Amboise, and repeated disparaging remarks which Julius had let drop about the Most Christian King. Though professing to believe that the Pope would still meet his wishes in everything, Louis was in fact extremely dissatisfied, and complained openly to the Florentine envoy, Pandolfini, that he was being scurvily treated. In December 1505, when a new creation of Cardinals furnished Louis with yet another proof of the Pope's contempt for his wishes, his vexation and annoyance were such as Pandolfini found it impossible to describe. 'Though the Legate was confined to his room, the King sent for him at once, so that he might give vent to his feelings and take counsel with him. He complained bitterly of the Pope and of all Italy. "They think", he said, "that there is no life in me, but I will let our Holy Father understand that he is mistaken." What was then decided I do not know; but the other day the Chancellor, talking to me of the affair, said that His Majesty would sequestrate all the property and benefices belonging to the Pope's friends in the Duchy of Milan, to show him his error.'[2]

Julius set himself to patch up this quarrel, because he was now eager to embark upon a plan which could not well be carried out in the face of French opposition. Checked for the time being in his designs against Venice, and confronted in the south by the power of the Spaniards, Julius, if he

[1] *Archiv für österreichische Geschichte*, vol. lxvi, pp. 65–6.

[2] Canestrini et Desjardins, *Négociations diplomatiques de la France avec la Toscane*, vol. ii, pp. 103–5, 153–4.

would begin his self-imposed task of reconstituting the temporal power, must advance where the roads were not closed. His intention was to begin by re-asserting his authority over Perugia and Bologna, cities which in theory were Papal Vicariates, but in fact were subject respectively to the families of Baglione and Bentivoglio, who had long ceased to respect the Pope's authority. The power of these families rested upon no better title than force, and the Pope was assured by exiles, who solicited his intervention, that a long course of oppression and extortion had made their rule odious to their subjects. If that were so, Julius supposed that he might deal successfully with the unpopular rulers, provided that his stroke were so sudden as to deprive them of the chance of extraneous assistance. He prepared unobtrusively, announced his intention in a Secret Consistory on 17th August 1506, left Rome on the 26th, reached Orvieto on 5th September, there received the submission of Baglione, and on the 13th entered Perugia in state.

He was right in his calculations, the rapidity of his actions rushing likely opponents into a reluctant acquiescence. Before setting out, he had demanded that Venice should remain neutral and that France should assist. Venice in reply warned him in menacing tones against the danger of stirring up trouble in Italy and thereby encouraging the Emperor to undertake his projected invasion; but she talked merely, and did not act. Louis was in two minds. He shared the Venetian view that it would be disastrous to do anything which might bring Maximilian into Italy, but he had no particular wish to befriend Bentivoglio nor any objection to the punishment of Baglione, who had treacherously deserted him during the Neapolitan war. In this state of uncertainty he began by attempting to dissuade the Pope from his enterprise, and ended by sending troops to his aid. When the news of the Pope's expedition reached the French Court, Robertet asseverated that it was not being undertaken in pursuance of any agreement with his King, who regarded it as inopportune, and had desired Julius to give it up. Pandolfini thought it clear that the Pope could not be counting on the support of the King of France, and supposed that he must be relying on the countenance of the Emperor. On the day after the Pope's entry into Perugia Machiavelli, who was

with him, regarded it as very doubtful whether the French would supply him with armed assistance, and considered that he would be rash to go on, if such help should fail. Many supposed, said Machiavelli, that as a last resource the Pope would throw himself into the arms of Venice. Others were of opinion that the Venetians could not venture to take a hand in the business, if the King of France should decline to do so, for either the King could not help the Pope, or he would not; if he would not, it was unreasonable to suppose that he would be willing to see the Venetians in a rôle which he had refused, or be so foolish as to risk angering the Pope and driving him into the arms of Venice; if he could not, the reason for his incapacity must be sought in the Emperor's projected visit to Italy, and in that case the Venetians ought to be influenced by the same motives and deterred by the same considerations. However, the French might not have argued in this fashion, for they were not remarkable for subtlety of mind, and perhaps they would not object to others doing that which they did not want to do themselves. Time, the parent of truth, would show the result.[1]

After spending a week in Perugia Julius set out again towards Bologna, taking the road which crossed the mountains, in order that he might avoid Rimini and its Venetian occupants. The journey was unpleasant, for rain fell in torrents, and the sumpter animals slid and tumbled on the slippery paths. At Borgo Julius received a letter from Louis promising to send troops to his aid, a promise which freed him from further apprehension on the score of the Venetians. At Cesena he reviewed his army, and at Forlì, where he was joined by Chaumont d'Amboise and his lances, he excommunicated Bentivoglio, and threatened to put Bologna under an interdict, if it should not submit within nine days. The people of Bologna felt no desire to confront Papal censures and French swords in the interests of an unpopular ruler, and on 1st November Bentivoglio, accepting the inevitable, fled to the Milanese under a safe-conduct granted to him by Chaumont. The Pope entered Bologna, and in the following month acknowledged his obligations to Louis by conferring three red hats on his nominees. But the relations between Rome and France did not on that account become cordial.

[1] Machiavelli, *Opere*, vol. v, p. 186

Julius was displeased that the French should have harboured the fugitive tyrant of Bologna; and his resentment was increased by Louis' ill-judged boasts that he could put Bentivoglio back, whenever he pleased. The French, on their part, believed that Julius was fomenting, if he had not instigated, the trouble which they were having with the city of Genoa; and when that trouble took Louis to Italy at the head of an army, the Pope so far distrusted his intentions that he left Bologna promptly, and returned to the greater security of Rome.

The condition of Genoa[1] had been causing uneasiness to the French for some time past, for although, as a chronicler recorded, its warehouses abounded in merchandise and its port was full of ships bearing innumerable riches to its quays, yet prosperity had not brought happiness, and the city was still rent by the civic feuds for which it had long been notorious. Earlier struggles for political power had resulted in a compromise, which provided that one half of the public offices should be held by the nobles and the other half reserved for representatives of the people. The arrangement satisfied nobody. It did not satisfy the nobles, who resented the intrusion of the people in a sphere which they had once monopolized, and who, being more united than their rivals and more hopeful of winning the countenance of their aristocratic overlords, were tempted by the establishment of French rule to plot for the recovery of the ground they had lost. It did not satisfy the *popolo grasso*, the *bourgeoisie* or merchant class, which measured its claim to political influence by the extent of its accumulated wealth, and thought itself entitled to a predominant share in the government. Still less did it satisfy the other section of the popular party, the *popolo minuto*, or artisan class, which it left entirely out of account, but which claimed to be treated on an equality with the nobles and the *bourgeoisie*, and demanded that the public offices should be shared in equal thirds between itself and the other two sections of the population. The quarrel was embittered by the arrogance of the nobles, and especially by the outrageous conduct of some hot-headed young

[1] For my account of the revolt of Genoa I am indebted in an exceptional degree to E. Pandiani, *Un Anno di Storia Genovese* (*Giugno 1506–1507*), being vol. xxxvii of the *Atti della Società Ligure di Storia Patria* (1905).

bloods, who armed themselves with slender daggers inscribed with the words: 'Down with the villeins!', and embarked upon a systematic course of insult and oppression. One or two incidents are recorded which show to what lengths 'the Company of the Needle', as they called themselves, could push their cruelty and insolence. In June 1506, in one of Genoa's busiest streets, they set upon two *bourgeois*, whose crime was having the hardihood to request that money which they had lent might be repaid, and the incident had stirred in the populace a resentment which the intervention of certain leading citizens had with difficulty restrained. On another occasion a young noble tried to possess himself of the wife of a certain notary, turned upon a citizen who came to her rescue, and killed his man; and when the officers of justice came to the murderer's house, they found it guarded by a gang of his friends, who refused to give them passage on the ground that the law forbad domiciliary visits to noble dwellings.

Another incident, not intrinsically of much importance, occasioned another and more serious disturbance. On 6th July a peasant, vending his wares in the Piazza San Lorenzo, was approached by a noble, Bartolommeo del Fiesco, who desired to purchase a basket of mushrooms displayed for sale on the peasant's stall. The peasant asked a price which his customer thought excessive, and after some haggling del Fiesco lost his temper, pursued the peasant with foul-mouthed abuse, and finally struck him in the face with his clenched fist. At the noise of the altercation a relative of the peasant, by name Ghiglione, ran up, and rebuked del Fiesco for his bad behaviour; but he in his turn was set upon by another bystander, Gian Giorgio del Fiesco, who threatened him with a dagger. At the sight of cold steel Ghiglione took to his heels, running for refuge to one of the poorer quarters of the city, and there shouting at the top of his voice: 'To arms! To arms!' As he ran, he saw outside a shop one of the huge knives with which butchers plied their trade, seized it, turned upon his pursuer, and, brandishing his murderous weapon over his head, chased him back ignominiously into the Piazza San Lorenzo. Meanwhile, from the neighbouring slums the artisans, who had risen at Ghiglione's appeal, were pouring out in arms, and the two Fieschi were

with difficulty saved from the hands of an angry mob by the presence and authority of a French official, Roquebertin, who ruled Genoa as the deputy of the absent Governor, Ravenstein. Deprived of its expected vengeance, the mob refused to disperse, and Roquebertin realized that he was confronted by a situation which called for vigorous action. His first step was to exile Ghiglione and the two Fieschi, in whose quarrel the trouble had originated. After this exhibition of impartial firmness he proceeded to summon a council of influential citizens to advise him upon the best means of arresting the disturbance. The populace, which looked to this body to secure for it some of the reforms which it had long demanded, grew impatient and discontented, when it found that the assembly talked, hesitated, and delayed. On 18th July it rose again under its chiefs, Manuele Canale and Paolo Battista Giustiniani, and marched to and fro through the city with cries of 'France! France! Long live the People!' As it passed, some of those who watched its progress indulged in some chaff about its unwarlike appearance, and the crowd, stung by the taunt, turned upon two inoffensive spectators, members of the noble House of Doria, killing one of them, and seriously wounding the other. There then appeared upon the scene Gian Luigi del Fiesco, who had come out from his palace in the Via Lata with his adherents at his back for the purpose of chastising the insolent populace and suppressing its demonstration; but faced with the crowd, armed and menacing, he was forced to acknowledge that he had over-estimated his power, and beat an ignominious retreat. Meanwhile, the news of the disturbance had been carried to Roquebertin, and he had been told that, so far from the situation showing any sign of improvement, the danger grew with every hour that passed. With admirable courage and resolution Roquebertin went out into the streets alone, and with no arms but a walking-stick confronted the angry mob. Ordered to lay down their arms, the people replied that they would do so when assured of two-thirds of all civic offices. This demand, in his apprehension of greater dangers, Roquebertin promised to grant, and a hastily composed proclamation confirmed the concession. Part of the crowd then dispersed, but the more ignorant and violent elements were not so easily to be appeased, and under cover

of darkness predatory bands began a series of attacks upon noble dwelling-houses. Thus menaced, the nobles either fled to their country places, or took refuge in the stronghold of the Fieschi in the Via Lata.

Next morning the Popolari met at the Palazzo to elect officers under the new law. A rumour circulating that Gian Luigi del Fiesco was collecting armed men in the Via Lata, the assembly decided to deal first with this menace to its newly won privilege, and sent to demand that Fiesco should either come in person to the Palazzo or leave the city. Fiesco sent back to say that he would come, but that it would be with four hundred men at his back; and the crowd, infuriated by his insolence, surged away to the Via Lata, to avenge itself for the insult. Their bird was flown, however, del Fiesco having deemed it wise to leave the city with his partisans, after posting a guard to hold the Porta dell' Arco and cover his flight. After a brush with this guard the Popolari returned to the Palazzo, to proceed with the business for which they had originally met there. Roquebertin addressed them, and was followed by Vincenzo Sauli, who in a conciliatory speech praised the conduct of the Deputy Governor, and suggested measures for quieting the disorder. After a second address by the Deputy Governor, promising a general pardon to all implicated in the disturbances, the new officers were elected, and an olive branch was held out to the nobles in an intimation sent to Gian Luigi del Fiesco, their leader, that he might consider himself at liberty to return to Genoa.

On 20th July Genoa seemed to have forgotten the alarums and excursions of the two preceding days: the streets had resumed their normal appearance, the shops were open, business proceeded as usual, and the city gave every indication of having settled down to its normal routine. Beneath this smooth and orderly surface, however, the popular excitement smouldered on, ready to break out again at the slightest provocation, and rumour was presently at work once more in a congenial soil. Wild tales passed from mouth to mouth: the Fieschi were collecting men in the Via Lata; they were landing cargoes of arms; they had been seen in secret conference with the French officer who commanded the Castelletto. The tales did their work, and the people were soon in

arms again, parading the city with shouts of 'France! France! Long live the officers of the People! Death to all gentlemen!'. Once more Roquebertin put himself forward in a courageous attempt to allay the excitement, but he was carried along by the mob, and looked helplessly on, whilst the palace of the Fieschi was seized and sacked.

At this juncture it occurred to the leaders of the popular party that prudence required some approach to Louis XII, who might be expected to feel some resentment at the many insults to his authority which the disorders had occasioned; and on 21st July they wrote to him, justifying what had occurred, and announcing the dispatch of an embassy which would be charged to furnish a fuller explanation. By way of additional precaution they also wrote to Ravenstein, the Governor, to the Cardinal of Rouen, and to the Cardinal's nephew, Chaumont d'Amboise, the Lieutenant-Governor of the Milanese. Two days later Niccolò Oderico, a lawyer, was chosen to go to the King, to explain that the tumults had been provoked by the arrogance of the nobles, to justify the new appropriation of public offices, and to apologize for the deeds of violence, which had been committed by evil-disposed persons mixing with the crowd and pursuing their own illicit ends under cover of the general disturbance. Before Oderico could reach him, the King had written to Genoa. He had heard of its quarrels, he said, and was greatly displeased, for he wished his subjects to live in tranquillity. He had directed that Ravenstein, the Governor, should proceed to his post without delay, and he had told his Lieutenant-Governor in Milan to repair in the meantime to Genoa with members of his Council, in consultation with whom he was to take steps to pacify the disturbances. Finally, he enjoined upon his subjects that in the interests of their city they should compose their quarrels and lay down their arms, when he would use his best endeavours to do justice to all parties.

At the same time the nobles also took steps to lay their views before the King. Somewhat strangely, as it would seem, if they wished to win his favour, they took the line that the trouble was wholly due to the inefficient, corrupt, and partial administration of the Royal officials, commissioning Andrea Doria, their spokesman, to accuse Roquebertin

of dereliction of duty, indifference to the rights of the nobility, and improper sympathy with the popular cause. The nature of the representations which Doria was instructed to make may be inferred from the memorial in which their views were soon afterwards embodied. In this document[1] they maintained that, whilst the people were to blame for much that had happened, the bad behaviour of the Royal officials had been the chief factor in producing the unrest. For several years past, they averred, these officials had been grossly extortionate in their demands for money, fleecing the city through a new official whom they had set up under the style and title of Procurator-Fiscal, an office never before known in Genoa. Every venial offence had been treated as a matter of high treason, and the victim haled off before the Governor's court. Ignorant in such matters and exasperated by this treatment, the lower orders in the city and the peasantry of the Riviera had allowed themselves to be persuaded into rebellion by seditious persons, whose object was to degrade and destroy the King's authority. They had risen for the first time under Giustiniani on 20th June, but that tumult had been appeased by the tact and skill of the nobles, and although these had suffered much in the course of it, yet that which the people desired had been done. At that time the Governor's Deputy, Roquebertin, was away at the baths at Acqui, and although repeatedly informed of the disturbances and urged to return, he had not troubled to do so. Indeed, if reports were true, he had said on hearing the news: 'Let it be; it will warrant a fine of 10,000 *écus*.' When he did at length return, Giustiniani, the leader and chief instigator of the trouble, went out two days' journey to meet him, and his subsequent conduct left little room for doubt that Giustiniani had succeeded in bribing him. For when he reached Genoa, he not only refrained from trying to quell the sedition, but actually laboured to foment and increase it, remained in close touch with Giustiniani, persuaded the people to reduce the size of their elected committee so as to secure greater secrecy, carried on a clandestine correspondence with that committee, and persistently

[1] 'Memoriale de le cosse accadute in la sublevacione de li populi de Genes', published by L. G. Pélissier in *Atti della Società Ligure di Storia Patria*, vol. xxiv.

refused to suppress the popular officials, though begged by the nobles to do so for the sake of the King's honour and interest. Seeing matters conducted in this fashion, the populace grew bolder, and on 18th July they rose *en masse*, this time under the leadership of the Sauli and of other popular families. In this revolt one noble was killed, one grievously wounded, and others were mishandled; and the list of noble casualties would have been longer but for the fact that few nobles were to be met with in the streets, because in their reluctance to take up arms without permission they had resolved to keep out of the way. The nobles had offered Roquebertin their assistance in suppressing this disturbance, but he had declined it, preferring to go about in the company of the rebels, and permitting many robberies and deeds of violence, including the looting of more than fifty noble dwellings, in some of which the ladies were violated. Next day the rebels had elected officials at their pleasure in defiance of the established civic constitution, and then had gone back again to their looting in the presence of Roquebertin, who said that he could not restrain them. Seeing what they had suffered at the hands of Roquebertin and the populace, the nobles had determined to lay their grievances before the King, and had accordingly commissioned Andrea Doria to go to him with a full account of all that had occurred.[1]

Doria on his arrival at Court found there Ravenstein, who was naturally anxious that the stories about his lieutenant's alleged delinquencies should not reach the King's ears, and who contrived to prevent Doria being received in audience by saying that it could serve no useful purpose, as he himself was leaving for Genoa. When the nobles heard that Doria had been muzzled in this fashion, they dispatched two other emissaries to discharge the duty which he had failed to fulfil; but the new messengers encountered Ravenstein on the road, and were ordered by him to abandon their mission. Ravenstein had set out with an escort of a thousand men, and at Asti was joined by large numbers of fugitive nobles from Genoa, who saw in him the champion of their cause and the prospective chastiser of the disorderly populace. He was also met there by three representatives of the Popolari, who on the pretext of rendering homage had come to

[1] *Atti della Società Ligure di Storia Patria*, vol. xxiv, pp. 534–6.

counteract the nobles' intrigue and to furnish proof of their perversity. An illness, which made him unfit to travel, delayed Ravenstein for some weeks in Asti, but towards the end of August he was well enough to resume his journey, and on the 28th entered Genoa, severe of aspect, at the head of his thousand men. The immediate erection of a gallows in the public square proclaimed his intention to make himself the master of the turbulent city.

Ravenstein did not permit any Genoese nobles to enter the city in his company, but as soon as he had established himself in the Palazzo, he invited the Fieschi to return, and on 30th August they were again in occupation of their palace in the Via Lata, where they began to assemble men and arms. Alarmed by their presence and their preparations, the people again became active, and on 4th September sent a deputation to the Governor, to beg that the Fieschi might be sent away. Ravenstein agreed to the request after some demur, gave an order that the Fieschi should depart, and went out in person to see to its accomplishment. He found that the populace had taken matters into their own hands, and were making ready to attack the Fieschi palace. Invited to lay down their arms, they refused to do so whilst any of their enemies remained in the city; and being requested by Ravenstein to make an exception in favour of Filippino del Fiesco, they declared that their immutable resolve was to purge Genoa of every member of the evil brood. Ravenstein submitted, and, mounting his horse, escorted Gian Luigi del Fiesco from the city. The mob tried to pursue, but were stopped by the city gates, which were kept closed by the Governor's orders under the guard of troops. To calm the ferment, Ravenstein then announced that he would permit another election of officers, provided that the people would first lay down their arms. When the new officers met on 6th September, their first act was to appoint six captains to watch over the safety of the city, and amongst them was found the name of Paolo da Novi, of whom more would be heard before many weeks had passed.

Up to this time the two sections of the popular party, despite *bourgeois* disapproval of the violent methods of the proletariat, had on the whole acted in unison for the attainment of a common end; but henceforth their policies

diverged. Satisfied with the success which had been attained, and reluctant to make the nobles irreconcilable, the *popolo grasso* desired chiefly the restoration of the tranquillity which was essential for the restoration of trade. As is the way of mobs, when they have felt their power and tasted blood, the *popolo minuto* were in a more adventurous mood, and listened complacently, when their leaders urged that their work would not be fully done until the Fieschi, whom they had driven from Genoa, had also been deprived of their authority in the country districts beyond the walls. The environs of Genoa were divided into two districts, known as the Riviera di Levante and the Riviera di Ponente, and were subject, not to the city, but directly to the King himself. The Riviera di Ponente was supposed to be ruled by an officer appointed by the King, but seldom saw its ruler except at such times as he might come to sit at the receipt of tribute-money. The other was held by Gian Luigi del Fiesco by grant from the King, and unlike recent events, which could be represented as legitimate steps in a contest for civic power, or at least as regrettable incidents in a faction fight, an attack upon Gian Luigi's power could only be interpreted as a direct challenge to the authority of the sovereign. The *popolo minuto*, having persuaded itself that the eviction of Gian Luigi was essential to its security, did not pause to ponder this consideration. They meant to have the Riviera di Levante, and took their measures accordingly. Vessels carrying their Commissaries were dispatched, the one to Spezzia, the other to Chiavari. Spezzia surrendered at the first summons, but Chiavari, strongly garrisoned by Fieschi troops, not only bade defiance to the Commissary, but even sent out a detachment which retook Spezzia. Infuriated by this reverse, Genoa addressed itself in earnest to the reduction of the Fieschi possessions, and on 24th September a strong flotilla made sail for Spezzia. It found the place abandoned, and upon proceeding to Chiavari discovered that there also the Fieschi had desisted from all attempts at resistance. At the same time the Marquisate of Finale in the western Riviera, which had been occupied by the Cardinal of Finale with the help of Genoese nobles, was recovered by its legitimate owner, the Marquis Alfonso del Carretto, with the connivance and surreptitious assistance of the Genoese Government.

The King, who had begun by hoping that Genoa might settle its differences without embroiling him in the quarrel, had accorded a gracious reception to the people's envoys, and had sanctioned the constitutional amendment which increased their civic power. He had also promised to consider their suggestion that the city and its environs should be united in one command. On that account he was the more angry when he heard of the attacks on Spezzia and Chiavari; nor was there anything to soothe him in the report which followed that the Genoese declined to surrender their conquests into the hands of his representative. So vehement was his anger that the city's envoys wrote home in unconcealed anxiety to awaken their Government to the danger of the situation, and to impress upon them that Genoa must expect the worst, if the people would not give up their conquests and lay down their arms. The admonition reached Genoa on 20th October, and next day the Governor and the civic officials met in council to consider how they might steer a course between the Scylla of popular hot-headedness and the Charybdis of Royal retribution. They decided that the Riviera must be surrendered into the hands of Ravenstein and that letters should be sent to the King, acquainting him with the decision, and protesting the loyalty of Genoa to his person and throne. But they had reckoned without the populace, which would have none of these timorous counsels and offered to its magistrates a choice between the instant reversal of the obnoxious decree or immediate death for every one of its authors. Emboldened by this assertion of its power, it then caused the command of the city's army to be offered to Tarlatino Tarlatini, a famous Pisan soldier, and on the morrow, 24th October, pushed its effrontery to the point of electing tribunes to control and supervise the Governor. This was more than even the patient Ravenstein could tolerate, and on the following day he left Genoa.

In the nobles' Memorial, from which I have already quoted, the conduct of the Governor is subjected to severe criticism, the authors of that document not sticking at charges of incompetence, corruption, and treachery. In the first place, they complained that, instead of taking the precautions which the Governor of Milan and the nobles pressed upon him, and entering Genoa in imposing force, he had settled

the size of his escort in accordance with the fallacious reports of his lieutenant and the interested representations of the popular party. The blunder was serious, and was made worse by his subsequent apathy, for instead of availing himself of the impression created by his arrival, he had done nothing at the time when the popular party were thoroughly scared, and many of its leaders were in hiding and on the point of flight. All that he did was to take counsel with Roquebertin, and Roquebertin revealed to the Popolari the secrets of these conferences. When loyal forces approached the city, Ravenstein said that he had no need of them, and insisted that they should retire, despite the expostulations of their commander, who represented with energy that such an order was contrary to the King's interests. The troops gone, the people took up arms again, and carried through another travesty of an election, obtaining Ravenstein's consent by offering him money through Roquebertin and through the Flemish agent, who did Roquebertin's dirty work, and who, meeting a noble one day, said to him: 'You gentlemen give nothing, and therefore you will get no offices.' The people then went off to seize the Riviera, and Ravenstein not only did nothing to stop them, but actually intervened to prevent help being sent from Milan for the other side. They say, continued the Memorial, that they will do the same at Monaco, for now they take no account of the King, being able to get Ravenstein to do whatever they want; they even boast that the King himself will soon have to do the same; and they have deliberately ignored Royal proclamations, declaring that they could get the opposite decreed for an *écu*. Thus it might truthfully be said that the King had no authority whatsoever in the city of Genoa. Ravenstein had been promised 20,000 *écus* by the people on condition of getting their officers confirmed in office and their unconstitutional practices sanctioned, and of that amount he had actually received 3,000 *écus*. Another 5,000 *écus* had gone into the pockets of Roquebertin. Having thus fallen a prey to the King's own officials, the Memorial concluded, the nobles are constrained to appeal to His Majesty to provide a remedy for injustices which are no less injurious to his honour and authority than to the interests of the nobility. To provide such a remedy may appear to be diffi-

cult, but is in fact easy. If a suggestion may without presumption be advanced, His Majesty has at his disposal the six galleys which police the coast, 4,000 Swiss, 150 lances, and such of his subjects as belong to the noble party. These would make up a goodly host, and might win a speedy victory, especially if the command were given to some person of authority familiar with Italian conditions. In addition, it would be easy to cut off the city's supplies, since all the approaches are in the nobles' hands. Whatever be done, it were well it were done quickly, lest delay breed further disorder.

The Memorial is an *ex parte* statement, and it would be rash to give entire credence to its allegations. What may with confidence be said is that Ravenstein's weak and hesitating policy inspired in the Genoese populace a belief that the French Government were afraid of them, and thereby encouraged them to proceed along the road which led from agitation to revolt: for it was to revolt that they had committed themselves, when they attacked the eastern Riviera and refused to surrender their conquests into the hands of the King's representative. Elated by their success, and deceived by their apparent impunity, they now nourished more ambitious designs. On the other side of their city lay another littoral, the Riviera di Ponente, more extensive, populous, and wealthy than its eastern counterpart. On this territory the rebels now cast their eyes, finding it desirable politically for its support of noble power, economically for its control of the city's supplies, and strategically for its command of the route by which the suzerain might most conveniently advance to the punishment of his rebellious subjects. The Riviera di Ponente might justly be regarded as the mainstay of the power of the nobles. In Savona a band of aristocratic fugitives had joined hands with Yves d'Alègre, and with his connivance were hatching plots for the restoration of noble power. The Fieschi ruled in Loano, the Spinolas in Pieve di Teco, the Dorias in Oneglia. Mentone and Roccabruna, which belonged to the Duke of Savoy, were held in fee by the Grimaldi, the illustrious Genoese House which had long been established in Monaco. Only at Finale was there any disposition to favour the popular cause.

Jean Grimaldi, the last ruler of Monaco, had deserved well of his French neighbours, having helped Charles VIII to

conquer Naples and then helped Louis XII to conquer Milan. For these services he had been made a Royal Chamberlain and given the Governorship of Ventimiglia, a dependency of Genoa. About eight months before the troubles in Genoa began, he had perished in a quarrel with his brother, Luciano, who now ruled in his stead. True to the traditions of his family, Luciano was in the habit of augmenting his resources by levying dues on ships which trafficked in his waters, and he was not above having recourse to violence, when he encountered opposition. Accused of making a Spanish merchantman the object of his piratical attentions, he had been ordered to appear before the Governor of Genoa and defend his conduct, and the King had commanded that in default of appearance the Governor should proceed against him by force. The Genoese, who had secretly determined to attack Monaco, thought that they could avail themselves of the circumstance to represent their action as a loyal endeavour to enforce the will of their suzerain. In fact, their policy was inspired by very different considerations, the capture of Monaco being thought by them to offer the twofold advantage of impeding a French advance and dealing a crushing blow to the cause of the nobles.

The design to attack Monaco was suspected, but had not been acknowledged, when on 17th October the Genoese attacked Pieve di Teco, which was held by Luca Spinola, but in which the bulk of the population favoured the popular cause. Success in this undertaking established them in a place which was half way on the road to Monaco, and Grimaldi in alarm appealed for assistance to the Duke of Savoy, warning him of the danger to his own possessions, if the Genoese should be permitted to continue unchecked in their career of aggression. The Duke sent an envoy to Genoa to remind its people that Mentone and Roccabruna belonged to him, and to caution them against any tampering with his belongings. With more tact than truth the Genoese disclaimed all intention of interfering with any property of his; and then, whilst an ambassador went to amuse the Duke with further assurances, orders were sent to the army to seize Mentone and Roccabruna quickly, as the Duke, if given time, might take steps to render a seizure impossible. Find-

ing that he had been fooled and that his places had been taken and sacked, the Duke broke off diplomatic relations, arrested all Genoese subjects in his dominions, and began preparations for going to the aid of Monaco. Serious news also came from France, where d'Amboise threatened a punitive expedition led by the King in person, and where Louis himself declared that any army sent against Monaco would find that it had to do with the forces of the French Crown. Elated by success, and bent on the reduction of the Grimaldi stronghold, the Genoese paid no heed to warnings or to threats, boldly declaring that they meant to go on with the Monaco expedition, even if the King of France and all the world should combine to withstand them.

The Genoese army of 4,000 men, with Tarlatino in command, encamped under the walls of Monaco on 10th December. It brought with it twenty-two big guns firing iron balls, many smaller pieces, and two monster cannon, which had been sent by the Pisans, and were known by the names of the Buffalo and the Dragon. Summoned by Tarlatino to surrender, Monaco met the challenge with haughty defiance, Grimaldi declaring that he would know how to defend his town in such a way that no villein would ever set foot within its walls. To this the Genoese responded by putting a price of 3,000 *écus* on Grimaldi's head and proclaiming a reward of 500 *écus* for any man who would blow up his powder-magazine. That done, they encamped opposite the gate, 'on the hill which to-day is adorned by the lovely villas of Monte Carlo'. They were making a gambler's throw, staking all on quick success, and if such success were not obtained, their situation would not be enviable. Before them was a grim and formidable fortress, defended on all sides by sea and rock, carefully provisioned, adequately garrisoned by high-spirited troops, and heavily armed with many and powerful guns. Behind them the forces of their enemies were collecting for the relief of the beleaguered city. Between them and their base in Genoa the land route passed through the territories of hostile nobles, and the sea route was menaced by Grimaldi's galleys, which had retreated for safety to the roadstead at Nice. In the opinion of a council of war, their numbers were insufficient, the need for defending their rear calling for the addition of a further 3,000 men. Their equip-

ment was scanty, having been framed in the expectation of rapid success. The quality of the troops was poor, composed as they were of mercenaries, who thought only of their own skins, of Genoese townsmen, who had no energy or discipline, and of peasants from the Riviera, who had no military qualities; and the morale of the force might be judged by the fact that many were already threatening to desert, because their pay was in arrears. The Commissaries were prosperous merchants, who had not learned in the quiet life of the counting-house how to control insubordinate troops or to conduct military operations; the paymaster was an infirm old man, unequal to anxiety and fatigue; and the chief commissariat officer, by his own confession, was ignorant of the very rudiments of his business. In the executive branches the same incompetence prevailed: Tarlatino, indeed, enjoyed a considerable reputation, but his subordinates had no military skill or knowledge, and the chief artillery officer, after squandering his munitions in useless firing from ineffective positions, had to be arrested for incompetence, cowardice, and embezzlement. To crown all, Genoa itself was distraught by disputes among the leading popular families, and in the eyes of the Fregosi and the Adorni the fate of the army was of much less account than the fortunes of their faction and the outcome of their bitter hereditary feuds. Deplorable enough in any case, these fierce jealousies were made the more dangerous by the astute policy of the nobles. Unable themselves to re-enter Genoa by force, they sent to Ottaviano Fregoso, and invited him to go to the city and head a rising. The attempt failed, and its author was glad to escape with his life; but the excitement which it occasioned, and the arrests by which it was followed, contributed to the demoralization which was sapping the vigour of Genoa.

Though the Genoese army had encamped before Monaco on 10th December, it was not until the New Year that the siege could really be said to have begun, for during the first weeks the investment was incomplete, and supplies and reinforcements could enter Monaco without much difficulty. From the very outset things began to go wrong in the besiegers' camp. On 18th December they were attacked in rear and dislodged from their positions at La Turbie. A few days later the garrison made a furious sortie, in the course

of which a part of the siege works was destroyed and many guns were spiked. Even apart from the activities of the enemy the besieging force was hampered and delayed by its own mental, moral, and material poverty. Weeks passed before the gunners, ignorant of their business and short of suitable tackle, could contrive to mount their guns in positions from which an effective fire could be opened upon the town. Even then the emplacements were bad, and the gun crews were left without protection against hostile fire, because sappers were scarce, and the rank and file of the army, ordered to supply the deficiency, had refused to be employed in a duty which was at once arduous and hazardous. The consequences of defective preparation became apparent when the bombardment did at last begin on 2nd January 1507. A breach was made in the walls, but the gunners with their inadequate cover suffered so many casualties from the hot fire of the defence that it became imperative to withdraw the guns. Meanwhile the besieging army was becoming more and more straitened for money, despite the heavy taxation imposed for its support and the generous contributions of the great Genoese Bank of St. George. Powder had soon run so short that none could be spared for the big guns, and unpaid troops were deserting by companies. In March Paolo da Novi was sent to the camp as Commissary, but before his energy and enthusiasm had had time to bring order out of the existing chaos, a fact of the utmost gravity was brought to the knowledge of the Genoese Government. They learnt that an army of 1,000 horse and 4,000 foot had been formed at Asti, and was already marching on Monaco. Urgent orders were sent to the Genoese commanders that a final attempt should be made to carry Monaco by storm, and that in the event of failure the guns should be re-embarked and the troops withdrawn.

The night of 19th March was chosen for the last assault. To prepare for it, the fire of the guns was concentrated for many hours on a single stretch of wall, and, to assist it by creating a diversion, arrangements were made for a flotilla of boats to put landing-parties ashore near the entrance of the port. Urged on by the knowledge that they were making a final throw, the attacking forces displayed the courage and energy which had been so sadly lacking in previous opera-

tions, and in the course of a furious assault three Genoese standards were planted on the walls. But the *élan* of the attack was matched by the grim tenacity of the defence, and after a bitter hand-to-hand struggle of five hours' duration the assailants were at length driven off with great carnage. Their losses were swelled by the fate of the landing-parties, who were trapped on the shore by the sinking of their boats, and were then massacred by the garrison after the repulse of the main attack. Next day the Genoese broke up their camp and marched away, pursued by Grimaldi, who recaptured Roccabruna and Mentone, and effected a junction with Yves d'Alègre. The French commander then set about a systematic reduction of the western Riviera.

Meanwhile events in Genoa were taking a course which must precipitate a conflict with the King, and upon such a conflict the King felt an increasing disposition to enter. Thoroughly dissatisfied with the results of Ravenstein's rule, Louis for some time past had been bracing himself to take into his own hands the settlement of the Genoese imbroglio, and he was urged on by the nobles, who offered him a large subvention in aid of the expenditure which an expedition would entail. So long ago as the previous November the Genoese representative in France had reported that the King was in an ugly mood, and at the same period the Cardinal of Rouen had begun to threaten the city with a punitive expedition led by the King in person. A similar warning had been given by Ravenstein, after he had reached the Court upon his departure from Genoa and had discussed the situation with the King and his minister. In December the emissaries of the nobles came to the Court. The representative of the Popolari begged Louis not to listen to them; but he was told that it was the popular party which did not deserve to be heard, because they were rebels; and the reproof was emphasized by the signal honour with which the noble emissaries were received. Upon the news of the attack upon Monaco the Genoese envoy was dismissed summarily, and not long afterwards the Pope warned the city that Louis was so angry that no one dared to mention Genoa in his presence. Yet things were about to come to pass which would make him more furious still.

The citadel of Genoa, called the Castelletto, was held by

a large French garrison under Pierre de Salazar. Very strong, difficult of access, heavily fortified, and bristling with cannon, the great fortress dominated the city, and formed the mainstay of the French military power in Genoa, a smaller defensive work, the Castellaccio, existing, indeed, not far off, but being of such small importance that it was held by a garrison of no more than twenty men. Near the Castelletto were a Franciscan church and monastery, and here on the afternoon of Sunday 7th February a large congregation assembled to hear vespers. While the service was in progress, Salazar drew a cordon of troops round the church, and, after letting the women go, informed the men that they were under arrest, and marched them off to the neighbouring citadel. Here he examined his prisoners, and, after releasing such of them as belonged to noble families, set the rest to manual labour on a diet of bread and water. Roquebertin expostulated, but expostulated in vain, Salazar declaring that his action was a legitimate reprisal for the attacks which the Genoese had made upon soldiers coming to join his garrison; nor could Genoa obtain redress from the Lieutenant-Governor of Milan, to whom she appealed without success. When the ill-starred captives had been immured for a month in the castle, permission was granted to two Genoese citizens to visit their imprisoned relatives: they found them confined in a dungeon, and were sent back with a message from Salazar that, unless a sum of 6,000 *écus* were forthcoming on the morrow, the whole batch of prisoners would be put to death. The civic authorities made the spirited rejoinder that the arrest of their fellow-citizens had been grossly improper, and that Salazar would not receive payment of a penny-piece, so long as a single one of them was detained. Thereupon the French commander, who had already trained his guns upon the city, began a methodical bombardment both of the town and of the port. He was now in command of all the French forces in Genoa, for during the progress of these events a message from the King had ordered Roquebertin to send his Palace guards to the Castelletto, leaving to himself the choice between taking refuge there or quitting the city. Roquebertin having chosen the latter alternative, his men on the night of 2nd March marched to the Franciscan monastery, evicted the monks, and occupied and fortified their building.

The actions of Salazar, cruel and provocative as they were, hastened the process which was tending to throw political power in Genoa into the hands of a violent and blood-thirsty mob. Exasperated by the bombardment after being infuriated by the wanton arrests, the populace determined to rid Genoa of her French tyrants. In the execution of this resolve they turned their attention first to the smaller French fort called the Castellaccio, whose walls sheltered Regnault de Nouailles' little garrison of twenty men, together with three women who kept them company. The work was not strong, and after some hours of bombardment by the Genoese guns the garrison agreed to evacuate it, if permitted to march out in safety with their possessions. The terms of capitulation were accepted by the Genoese, and were solemnly sworn to by their leaders; but when the French came out, the mob attacked them, and all, including the women, were brutally murdered save one man, whom Genoese friends rescued by providing him with a disguise.

Having thus burned their last boats, the populace resolved to meet the inevitable with a bold face, met in council, declared war on the King, and determined by capturing the Castelletto to purge Genoa of the last vestiges of his power. For this purpose six captains were elected and entrusted with appropriate powers to enlist men and requisition materials. These foolhardy decisions, inspired by the vanity and violence of the mob, did not commend themselves to the *bourgeois* element in the city, which knew the dangers of a trial of strength with the King of France, and had too much at stake to welcome the prospect of such a conflict. Undaunted by their tepidity and trepidation, the *popolo minuto* threw itself into the new plan with characteristically intemperate impetuosity. In a great *élan* of self-sacrifice and patriotic fervour orders were issued, and were cheerfully observed, that every man should take his precious metals to the Mint and then should hold himself in instant readiness to obey the commands of the Gonfaloniers.

The siege of the Castelletto was then begun. Barricades were placed across the approaches; the neighbouring houses were converted into military works; and all available guns, including the Dragon and the Buffalo, which had been brought back from Monaco, were concentrated on the for-

tress. By Easter Sunday, 4th April, the French had begun to suffer severely by the continuous bombardment; the church and monastery of San Francesco, which they had fortified, were in great part destroyed, and a building which had caught fire had been abandoned. On the morning of Tuesday, 6th April, the trumpets summoned the Genoese to the assault, and in large numbers they hurled themselves against the ruined walls of the half demolished monastery. They gained a footing in the garden, and raised scaling-ladders against the inner works, but the defence was obstinate, and after a struggle which continued through the day the assailants were repelled with heavy loss. Next day the bombardment was begun again, and with such destructive effects that on 9th April the French were obliged to evacuate the monastery. The great citadel still stood intact, however, and help was at hand. A large French army was being mustered in Lombardy; Yves d'Alègre was advancing by the western Riviera; and on 13th April the intrepid Prégent de Bidoux, forging ahead of his slow-moving sailing-ships, entered the harbour of Genoa with his galleys, made his way to the dockyard, and inflicted much damage without encountering the smallest opposition.

It seemed, however, as though danger served rather to stimulate than to daunt the spirit of the Genoese. On 10th April, in the midst of these alarms, some persons in the crowd hoisted one of their leaders on to their shoulders, and raised the cry: 'Viva il Doge! Viva Paolo da Novi!'. For a moment there was no response, but the silence of surprise was succeeded by frenzied applause, as the memory of Genoa's greatness was recalled to the minds of the people by the mention of the ancient office which was associated with her past glories. Of the man in whose person the supreme magistracy was thus revived by the acclamation of the people not much is known to us. A man of physical strength and determined will, Paolo da Novi had risen by the qualities which bring the strong man into prominence during periods of disturbance. Both in the defence of Genoa and in the unfortunate Monaco operations he had rendered services of no inconsiderable value, but it was not so much by these as by his fervid championship of the popular cause that he had won the favour of the mob. By trade a silk dyer, he belonged

to the artisan class, and it was in part through his exertions that that class had ended by wresting power from the hands of the *bourgeoisie* after having first helped the *bourgeoisie* to wrest it from the hands of their common enemy, the nobles. The accumulated savings of an industrious life had given him a stake in the welfare of his city, and in that respect he was akin to the *bourgeoisie*; but in the matter of education he was a true son of the people; and in so far as he was qualified to undertake the anxious and responsible duties which awaited him, it was by native gifts of shrewdness and good sense, by probity of character, and by force of will.

None but a fearless patriot or a feckless fool would have accepted an honour so perilous in a moment so critical. Genoa knew well by now that she had to do, not merely with d'Alègre's levies or Prégent's galleys, but with all the might of the angry monarch who could command the resources of the greatest military power in Christendom. The army which Chaumont had collected in Lombardy was approaching, and the King was coming to place himself at its head. On 13th April he reached Turin, accompanied by 'the whole baronage of France'. Those who wished well to Genoa begged that even at this late hour she would strive by submission and apology to flee from the wrath to come. The Doge and his Council refused to hear of surrender, and busied themselves in the work of defence. Steps had already been taken to devastate the country through which the French must advance and to fortify and man the narrow defiles of the Ligurian Alps. On receipt of the news that the enemy were approaching, the Doge put men and guns in the hill forts which commanded the Polcevera valley, and ordered the construction of trenches and the preparation of ambushed positions in the valley itself. In spite of these precautions, however, no resistance was offered to the French, when on 22nd April they moved forward from Busalla, ravaging the country as they went, and entered the Polcevera valley; and if Chaumont did not immediately advance upon Genoa, the delay arose, not from the action of the enemy, but from his instructions to await the King, who desired to behold with his own eyes the downfall of the rebellious city. Louis was not far off. Leaving Asti on the 21st, he had entered Alessandria in state on the following day, had spent

the night of the 23rd at Marengo, and on the 24th rode into the camp at Busalla.

That day it was decided in a council of war that on the morrow a reconnaissance in force under La Palice should test the strength of the Genoese positions. Accordingly, on the morning of the 25th La Palice moved forward at the head of a considerable body of men with orders to find the best means of access to the heights and to destroy all fortified posts which might be met with on the lower slopes. He advanced without opposition as far as Rivarolo, but there found himself confronted by the main Genoese position. From the valley before him two roads mounted side by side to the crest of the adjacent hill; each was barricaded and defended by fortified houses; and both were commanded by a strong screen or bastion, which surmounted the summit and was held in force. Advancing under heavy fire, the French were met by a vigorous resistance, and had made but little progress when their commander fell out of the ranks, wounded in the throat. Undaunted by this misfortune, however, his men pressed on, supported by artillery and reinforced by Swiss; and when they had carried all the defensive posts on the lower slopes, the Genoese in the bastion blew up their powder magazine, and abandoned the position. Sending the Swiss in pursuit of the retreating enemy, and detaching other bodies to occupy the heights on the right of the valley, Chaumont threw his advance guard forward to Sampierdarena, and with the main body halted at Rivarolo, to await the King. Throughout the day the harassed garrison of the Castelletto had listened anxiously to the sound of distant conflict, and their joy may be imagined, when in the light of the setting sun they could descry the standards of their country floating above the hills.

Next morning Genoa sent two ambassadors to the French camp to ask for terms of peace. As the King declined to receive them, they were referred to the Cardinal of Rouen, but negotiations had no sooner begun than they were interrupted by sudden alarums and the noise of conflict. What precisely had occurred cannot now be ascertained. The French supposed that the Genoese had organized a surprise attack under cover of the negotiations, whilst the Genoese in their turn accused the French of beginning the fighting;

and the fact may well be that the conflict originated in some spontaneous outburst incidental to the situation. However that may be, the advantage rested at first with the Genoese, who fought with much greater determination than they had displayed on the preceding day, and by the impetuosity of their attack recovered the greater part of the ground which they had then lost. The success was but temporary, however, for they could not prevail for long against superior discipline and equipment, and before the end of the day they were once more in headlong retreat. As the fugitives re-entered Genoa, the two ambassadors returned from the French camp, to announce that the King would have nothing to do with terms of surrender, and insisted that the city must submit unconditionally and sue for mercy.

Such terms as Louis chose to dictate Genoa had no option but to accept, and recent Italian history afforded many dreadful examples of the treatment which a conquered city might look for at the hands of a victorious French army. It would be superfluous to describe the frenzy of Genoa during that night of terror. Paolo da Novi and other popular leaders fled from the city; their example was followed by most of those who could command a means of travel; the less fortunate, who were obliged to remain, sought refuge in the religious houses; and by the morning of the 27th Genoa, but now so full of life and animation, had assumed the aspect of a city of the dead. That day and the next were spent by Chaumont in occupying the city, re-victualling the Castelletto, and preparing for the King's entry; but happily for Genoa he came with small bodies of trustworthy troops, for Louis, naturally kind-hearted and mollified by success, had directed that the bulk of the army should remain outside the walls, safe from the temptation to pillage. On 29th April, about eleven o'clock in the morning, the Royal entry took place. Louis was met beyond the walls by the civic magistrates and chief citizens of Genoa, who, garbed in mourning, with heads bared and locks shorn, knelt before him and implored mercy. He rode, fully armed, under a baldacchino, escorted by a brilliant retinue of Cardinals and seigneurs, and greeted by triumphant salvoes from the artillery of the citadel and the guns of his fleet. He entered by the Porta San Tommaso, and on reaching it struck the gate

with his naked rapier, exclaiming: 'Ha! proud city of Genoa! Thou hast yielded to my sword'. Within the gate a cavalcade of Genoese nobles waited to do him honour, and with these added to his escort he rode on to the church of San Lorenzo, where a white-robed company of maidens and children greeted him with piteous appeals for mercy and forgiveness.

Genoa had little to complain of in the treatment meted out to her. She must expect that the King would take political power from those who had used it against himself and restore it to the nobles, along with their former honours and privileges. Some reprisals must also be looked for both from the nobles and from the French, and it was not surprising that such popular leaders as could be found should be thrown into prison or that those who had massacred the garrison of the Castellaccio should be seized and led away to execution. On 10th May the penalties to be exacted from Genoa were formally announced: she was to pay an indemnity of 200,000 *écus*, provide another 40,000 *écus* for building an additional fortress made necessary by her turbulence, discharge the annual cost of an enlarged garrison, and equip three galleys for the policing of her coasts. On these terms the King would consent to grant a pardon for her misdeeds, from which pardon, however, he excepted seventy-six persons specifically proscribed as rebels and traitors. One of these, Demetrio Giustiniani, had already been arrested, and was now led to the scaffold.[1] Another and more important, Paolo da Novi, was betrayed as he tried to escape, and was brought back to Genoa in one of Prégent's galleys. The Piazza was a sea of up-turned faces when on 16th June the ex-Doge, dressed in an old and torn coat and with his hands bound behind his back, was led out to meet his doom. In a few words spoken from the scaffold he craved pardon of all whom he might have wronged, and recommended to the people, from whom he had sprung, that they should remain united, obey the King, and place no trust either in the nobles or in the *bourgeoisie*. That said, he turned to the executioner beside him, and begged of him the mercy of a quick dispatch. The falling axe closed the last act in the drama of Genoa's bid for freedom.

[1] He seems to have suffered upon an instrument resembling the guillotine: see Jean d'Auton, *Chroniques de Louis XII*, ed. R. de Maulde, vol. iv, p. 280.

It was inevitable that the troubles of Genoa should attract the attention of the European powers, and few of his neighbours would have felt any regret, if by some miracle the King of France had been worsted in his contest with the rebellious city. The Pope's sympathy with Genoa was known to all; 'as a native of the Genoese territory he loved his country; as a man sprung from the people he was inclined to the popular side; as an Italian he looked with alarm at the presence of a powerful army with no definite object in view; as Pope he feared the designs of the Cardinal of Amboise, who was known to hanker after the Papacy and was capable of devising a scheme for his deposition'.[1] It was believed that he had secretly sent aid to the rebels, and although that belief was erroneous, Genoa having in fact got from him nothing more substantial than advice, it was true that events in Liguria had influenced his policy by reviving his suspicions of the French. Yet more marked was the effect upon Maximilian, ever jealous of France, recently affronted by the rupture of Madame Claude's engagement, harassed by the proceedings of Louis' *protégé*, the Duke of Guelders, concerned for the fate of Genoa by reason of its being an Imperial town, and profoundly disturbed by the ease and completeness of Louis' triumph. Thus it came about, as a Milanese chronicler recorded, that 'he began to consider in what way he might lessen the excessive power of the King of France, fearing lest in process of time that monarch might make himself king of all Italy'.[2] When Louis had been recruiting men in Switzerland for the Genoese expedition, the Emperor had unsuccessfully endeavoured to restrain the Cantons from according facilities for enlistment; and in April he had authorized Matthias Schiner, one of the leaders of the anti-French Swiss, to promise pensions and rewards both to the Cantons and to prominent individuals for the purpose of securing the aid of the Confederacy in a war to recover Milan for Ludovic's heirs.[3] In June he summoned a Diet of the Empire, and unfolded a new design: the King of France, he said, wanted

[1] Creighton, *History of the Papacy*, vol. iv, p. 92.

[2] Prato, 'Storia di Milano', in *Archivio Storico Italiano*, Series I, vol. iii, p. 264.

[3] A. Büchi, *Korrespondenzen und Akten zur Geschichte des Kardinals Matthias Schiner*, vol. i, pp. 64–6.

to wrest the Empire from Germany and secure the Papacy for his creature, d'Amboise; his own intention, therefore, was to go to Italy, that he might receive the Imperial Crown and assert Imperial rights.

The truculent attitude of the Emperor produced an immediate reaction in the policy of Ferdinand of Aragon, who was impelled by it to seek to strengthen the alliance between France and Spain which had been consecrated in the marriage of Germaine de Foix, and which was not the less precious to Ferdinand, now that death had suddenly removed the Archduke, and the Emperor claimed to assert in his stead the right to the regency of Castile. The regency question thus threatened Ferdinand at home in much the same way as the question of the Burgundian inheritance threatened Louis; and both were threatened abroad by the Imperial menace to the peace of Italy. They drew together in face of the common danger. Ferdinand at this time was in Naples, whither he had gone to take possession of his newly won kingdom, and perhaps also to keep an eye on the great soldier who had won and ruled it, and in so doing had created for himself a position of authority which gave umbrage to his jealous and suspicious master. Ferdinand, when on his outward voyage, had touched at Genoa in the early days of the democratic revolution, but had tactfully declined to go ashore, lest he should anger Louis by seeming to countenance his unruly subjects. His business in Naples done, he was about to return to Spain at the time of Louis' arrival in Italy, and it was agreed that the two rulers should meet at Savona, to dicuss their common concerns and to give to the world an unmistakable proof of their personal friendship and political solidarity. From Genoa therefore Louis repaired to Savona, to prepare for the reception of his illustrious guest.

Ferdinand left Naples in the first week of June, and made his way in leisurely fashion up the Italian coast. Julius waited for him at Ostia in the hope of an interview, but as he had not yet granted the investiture of Naples for which the King had asked, Ferdinand, to mark his displeasure, passed by without putting in. Towards the end of June the Spanish fleet reached Genoa, and on the morning of the 28th weighed anchor to go to Savona. Sanuto has preserved a letter in which an eyewitness described the incidents of an eventful

day. 'This morning', he wrote, 'the Most Christian King heard that the King of Spain had started from Genoa to come here, and thereupon the Cardinal of Rouen, accompanied by the Cardinals of Finale, Albi, and Narbonne, the Grand Master of Milan, the Princes of the Blood, and many other lords and gentlemen, went aboard the galleys commanded by Prégent, the Admiral of the Genoese Riviera, and put out to meet him. They greeted him with the usual salutes, and then put in at a place called Arenzano some seven miles from here, where the Cardinals and other lords went aboard the King's vessel, paid their respects, and stayed to dine. When the fleet approached Savona, the Most Christian King mounted a richly caparisoned horse, and, accompanied by our ambassador, by the Marquis of Mantua, and the Marquis of Montferrat, and by such other lords as had not gone with d'Amboise, and escorted by his bodyguard, rode to the jetty where the Catholic King was to land. There he dismounted, and awaited the coming of the galleys. The galleys rowed towards the shore in line ahead, with the King's galley leading; this galley had an awning of cloth of gold and white damask, her hangings were of red and yellow, and her crew were dressed in the same colours. When the galley came alongside the jetty, the Most Christian King announced his intention of going aboard her, and, albeit the Catholic King begged him not to think of it, he insisted, went up the gangway, and greeted the Catholic King with a Royal embrace. The greater part of the Spanish lords and gentlemen then disembarked, as did the French gentlemen; and when all had got on horseback, some rode a short way inland, whilst the rest stayed where they were. Their Majesties then came ashore, accompanied by the Queen, and mounted two mules, which stood in readiness for them, the Most Christian King taking up the Queen on his crupper. The Most Christian King then signed to the Catholic King to lead the way, but this he would not do, and after some interchange of civilities they rode off side by side, the Catholic King on the left and the Most Christian King on the right. At the gate of the town a French officer, an archer captain, offered the keys to the Catholic King, who declined them, but in the end, at the urgent solicitation of the Most Christian King, consented that they should be given to one

of his gentlemen; and that was done, although the gentleman in like manner demurred. The Kings were preceded by many lords, and were followed by the Cardinal of Rouen and the Great Captain, Gonsalvo Fernandez, then by the other Cardinals, and lastly by many Spanish knights. All the streets were carpeted, and over the Kings a canopy of crimson damask was borne by the civic authorities. . . . The Spanish Court, which is full of fashionable, well-dressed men, has much distinction; and yet, in my opinion, it is not the equal of the French'.[1]

Thus auspiciously began a meeting which was destined to be characterized throughout by the spirit of courtesy and consideration that marked its opening phase. When Ferdinand learnt that his old enemy, d'Aubigny, was present in Savona, confined to his room by gout, he went in person to visit him on his sick-bed. When Louis sat down to supper with Ferdinand and his Queen, he asked that Gonsalvo might make a fourth at the table, treated him 'exactly as though he also were a King',[2] and at parting pressed upon him the valuable chain which had adorned his own neck. The Great Captain, as Prescott observes, 'was emphatically the hero of the day. At least, such is the testimony of Guicciardini, who will not be suspected of undue partiality. Many a Frenchman there had had bitter experience of his military prowess. Many others had grown familiar with his exploits in the exaggerated reports of their countrymen. They had been taught to regard him with mingled feelings of fear and hatred, and could scarcely credit their senses as they beheld the bugbear of their imaginations distinguished above all others for "the majesty of his presence, the polished elegance of his discourse, and manners in which dignity was blended with grace" '.[3]

The generous spirit in which honourable enemies recognized each other's merits is a pleasant feature of the Savona episode, but it was not merely to exchange civilities that Ferdinand had come to Savona, and his visit was marked by repeated conferences with Louis XII, at which none but Georges d'Amboise was permitted to be present. Speculation

[1] Sanuto, *I Diarii*, vol. vii, cols. 87–8.
[2] P. Martyr, *Opus Epistolarum*, No. cccliii, p. 194.
[3] Prescott, *History of the Reign of Ferdinand and Isabella*, p. 641.

was rife about the object with which the sovereigns had met, the subject of their discussion, and the issue of their deliberations; but the secret which all Europe was agog to probe was never revealed. It was thought by some that the sovereigns had met to discuss the Turkish menace, which haunted the minds of all Christian statesmen, and by others that they were concerting action against their common enemy, Maximilian. Some believed that their concern was with Italy, and that their object was to cauterize the festering sore of the interminable Pisan war. Others conjectured that they had been brought together by a common fear of the Pope, and that the matters of which they talked were a General Council and the reform of the Church. All or any of these topics might without extravagance be supposed to have furnished the subject-matter of their deliberations, but in the light of subsequent events it is probable that another project held the field, and that in their secret conferences at Savona the sovereigns sowed the harvest of dragons' teeth which Venice was to reap in blood and tears on the tragic field of Agnadello.

INDEX

Abbiategrasso, 89.
Abruzzi, the: assigned to Louis XII on partition, 136, 150–1; submission to the French, 144; occupied by the Spaniards, 180; mentioned, 164.
Acqui, 271.
Adda, River, 65–6, 69, 122.
— Ghiara d': cession to Venice, 65–6, 69, 95–7, 122, 260–2; mentioned, 87, 89, 162.
Adorni, the, 280.
Adriatic Sea, 146, 160–1, 255.
Agnadello, Battle of, 294.
Aire, 51.
Aix, Archbishop of, 15.
Albi, Louis d'Amboise, Bishop of: *see* Amboise.
Albret, Aimon d', 22.
— Alain, Sieur d': marriage of his daughter to Cesare Borgia, 22–3; incompetent leadership in war with Spain, 180–2; relations with and evidence against Marshal de Gié, 230, 234–5, 238–9; mentioned, 226.
— Charlotte d', 22–3, 71.
Alègre, Yves d': to serve in Milan, 81; recalled from Romagna, 101; difficult retreat, 103–4, 125; denounces Trivulzio, 105; enters Novara, 106; siege of Novara, 112; war in Naples, 152, 158; at the battle of Cerignola, 176–8; in Gaeta, 178, 180; the Garigliano campaign, 198, 201–3; revolt of Genoa, 272, 282, 285–6.
Alessandria, 71, 86–9, 103–4, 286.
Alexander VI, Pope (formerly Cardinal Roderigo Borgia): Louis XII's divorce, 4, 7–8, 14, 16–17, 20; marriage of Cesare Borgia, 5–8, 14–15, 21–3, 70–1; supports France and Venice against Ludovic Sforza, 43–4, 47, 67–71, 77, 121–2; relations with Florence, 43–4; opinion of the French, 75–6; ambitions in Romagna, 43–4, 122–3, 154, 156, 182–3, 185, 254; supports France and Spain against Federigo of Naples, 134, 138–41, 154–6; grant of Legatine authority to d'Amboise, 156, 192–3, 255; other relations with France, 36, 47–9, 93; and with Venice, 147; death of, 183–5, 256.
Alfonso I, King of Naples, 41.
— II, King of Naples, 6.
Alps, the, 40, 44, 52, 55, 105, 114, 131.
Altamura, 6, 167.
Alva, Duke of, 181.
Alviano, Bartolommeo d': serves Spain in Naples, 189–91; the Garigliano campaign, 197–8; his tribute to Gonsalvo, 200.
Amboise, 1, 14, 58, 227–8, 230, 232–4, 238.
— Chaumont d': to serve in Milan, 81; becomes Governor of Milan, 120; joins Julius II against Bologna, 265; revolt of Genoa, 270, 275, 283, 286–8; interview of Savona, 292; mentioned, 23.
— Georges d', Cardinal of Rouen and Papal Legate: becomes a Cardinal, 7, 16–17; and Papal Legate, 156, 192–3, 255; character, career, and influence, 1, 25, 27–33, 34 n., 62, 226; candidature for the Papacy, 29, 156, 184–8, 191–3, 204, 210, 248, 290–1; relations with Cesare Borgia, 21–2, 182, 186, 188–90; hostility to Venice, 32, 67–8, 210, 258; and to Ludovic Sforza, 36, 77; arranges treaty with Savoy, 56; favours Florence, 67, 124; conquest and government of Milan, 93, 107, 110, 118–20; negotiates treaty of Arona, 131–3;

negotiates with Italian *condottieri*, 189–90; negotiates treaties of Trent, Hagenau, and Blois, 209–10, 218–22; negotiations with England, 214–15; and with Spain, 223; hostility to Marshal de Gié, 229–32, 240; marriage of Francis of Angoulême, 242–4, 248, 250; Julius II's dislike of, 263, 290; revolt of Genoa, 270, 279, 282, 287; interview of Savona, 292–4; mentioned, 8, 23, 76, 81, 125, 148.
— Louis d', Cardinal Bishop of Albi, 8, 11, 13, 28, 32, 208, 292.
Andrada, Fernando de, 173, 199.
Andria, 152, 167.
Angers, 67, 230, 233–4, 238.
Angoulême, Charles, Count of, 226–7.
— Francis, Count of: *see* Francis.
— Louise of Savoy, Countess of: *see under* Savoy.
— Margaret of: proposed English marriage for, 214–15, 224–5.
Anjou, 145.
Anne de Beaujeu: *see* Beaujeu.
— of Brittany: *see under* Brittany.
Annone, 86.
Apulia: assigned to Spain on partition, 136, 150; submits to Gonsalvo, 144; goes over to the French, 157; mentioned, 152, 202.
Aquila, 180.
Aragon, Beatrix of, 23.
— Ferdinand of: *see* Ferdinand.
— Katharine of, 214–15.
Arazzo, 85–6.
Arenzano, 292.
Arezzo, 155.
Armagnac, House of, 227, 234–5, 238.
Army, the: discipline and pay, 35, 80, 107, 140; Louis XII's reforms, 80–1; Marshal de Gié's projects of reform, 229, 236, 242; employment of Swiss mercenaries, 52–4, 65, 81, 100, 104, 107, 110, 124, 127–30, 140, 143, 153–4, 174 n., 180, 196, 229, 277, 287, 290; the Royal Guard, 61, 81, 94, 116; artillery, 82, 96, 125–6, 140, 142, 144, 194, 197–9; invasion of Milan, 81–2, 85–8, 90–1, 100–15; operations in Romagna, 103–4, 122–3; attack on Pisa, 125–7; invasion of Naples, 140–4, 152–4, 157–80, 188–91, 193–203; chivalrous combats, 165–71; battle of Cerignola, 174–8; operations on the Pyrenees, 180–2; campaign on the Garigliano, 193–9; surrender of Gaeta, 199–200; sufferings of the troops, 201–2; causes of the defeat, 203; revolt of Genoa, 281–90; licentious conduct of the troops in Italy, 95, 97–8, 119–20, 159.
Arniti, Constantine, 84, 93, 121.
Arona, 133.
— Treaty of, 133.
Arras, 51.
Ars, Louis d': serves in Milan, 103; in Naples, 154; Bayard serves under him, 167; at the battle of Cerignola, 176–8; defence of Venosa, 178–9, 202; welcomed home by Louis XII, 202–3.
Arthur, Prince of Wales, 214.
Artois, 51, 211, 217, 244, 246.
Asti, 8, 13, 39, 40, 56, 62, 75, 81–6, 116, 205, 217, 242, 246, 272–3, 281, 286.
Atripalda, 151.
Aubigny, Béraud Stuart, Seigneur d': his influence with Louis XII, 28; to serve in Milan, 81–2; to command in Naples, 140; in Rome, 141; capture and sack of Capua, 141–3; submission of Naples, 143–4; agreement with Federigo, 144–5; superseded, 145; war in Naples, 152–3, 157, 159; defeated at Seminara, 173–4; surrenders, 179–80; honoured by Ferdinand at Savona, 293; mentioned, 2, 148.
Auson, M. d', 81.
Austria; hostility of Maximilian to France, 35–6, 48–51, 65, 72–4, 135, 138–9, 153, 156, 206, 215,

245, 290–1; his support of Ludovic Sforza, 43, 52–5, 69, 72–3, 76, 78, 83, 87, 91, 99–100, 104, 107–8, 118–19; the Archduke Philip friendly to France, 35, 45, 47, 50–1, 69; proposed marriage of Prince Charles and Princess Claude, 26, 172, 204–9, 213, 216–18, 222, 225–6, 228–30, 239, 242–8, 250–1, 262, 290; Louis XII negotiates for an investiture of Milan, 206, 209–10, 212–14, 216–22, 245; treaty of Lyons (1501), 207–9; treaty of Lyons (1503), 171–3, 180, 216; treaty of Trent, 209–10, 212–13, 217; treaties of Blois, 216–18, 220, 228, 230, 242–3, 262; treaty of Hagenau, 218–22, 246; the Archduke visits France, 210–12.
— Charles, Duke of Luxemburg, Prince of: *see* Charles.
— Don John of, 147.
— Philip of: *see under* Philip.
Auton, Jean d', 28, 156.
Auxerre, 51.
Auxonne, 217.
Avellino, 151.
Aversa, 141, 144, 178.
Avignon, 7, 15, 255.
Ayala, Inigo Lopez de, 169.

Baglione, House of, 182, 264.
— Gian Paolo: seizes Perugia, 185, 264; enters the French service, 189, 191.
Baissey, Antoine de, Bailli of Dijon, 53, 107, 113, 128–9, 180.
Bank of St. George, 281.
Bari, 152, 157, 159, 167.
— Isabella, Duchess of, 152.
Barletta, 152–4, 157–63, 165, 168–9, 171, 175, 193.
Bar-sur-Seine, 51.
Basilicate, the, 150.
Basoche, Clercs de la, 241.
Bassignana, 86–7.
Bayard, Pierre Terrail, Seigneur de: war in Naples, 154; combat of the Eleven, 165–7; early career, 167; duel with Sotomayor, 167–8, 170; exploits in the Garigliano campaign, 194, 199.
Beaujeu, Anne de France, Dame de, Duchess of Bourbon: relations with Louis XII, 2–3, 43, 48; feudal opposition to, 17, 27, 43; her services, 18, 25; a partisan of Ludovic Sforza, 32; trial of Marshal de Gié, 238; marriage of Princess Claude, 250; mentioned, 55, 226.
— Pierre de, Duke of Bourbon: relations with Louis XII, 2–3, 33, 43, 48; with Ludovic Sforza, 32–3; mentioned, 226.
Beaumont, M. de, 125–7.
Beaune, Jacques de, 181.
Bellaggio, 90.
Bellinzona: declares for Ludovic Sforza, 100; ceded to the Swiss, 129–33, 156; mentioned, 103, 111.
Bentivoglio, House of, 121, 182, 264.
— Giovanni, 265–6.
Bergamo, 262.
Berne, 54.
Berry, 23, 117.
Bertinoro, 256.
Besançon, Archbishop of, 210–12.
Béthune, 51.
Bianca of Savoy, 55.
Bisceglie, 154, 163.
— Duke of, 6.
Bisignano, Prince of 174, 223.
Bitonto, 157.
Blanchefort, Guy de, 146, 148.
Blois, 1, 21 n., 22, 27, 33, 202, 212–13, 217, 231–2, 235–7, 242, 244.
— House of, 19.
— Ordinance of, 31.
— Treaties of (in 1504), 216–18, 220, 228, 230, 242–3, 261–2; treaty of (in 1505), 224.
Bohemia, 209.
Bologna, 93, 104, 121, 140, 182, 264–6.
Bona of Savoy, 36.
Bordeaux, 35.
Borgia, Cardinal Roderigo: *see* Alexander VI.

Borgia, Cesare, Duke of Valentinois: Alexander VI's plans for him, 6–7, 34; bargain with Louis XII, 7–8; renounces clerical orders, 14–15; goes to France, 15–16; alleged murder of the Bishop of Ceuta, 16–17; marries Charlotte d'Albret, 21–3, 70–1; the French conquest of Milan, 67, 81, 93, 100; ambitions and activities in Romagna, 101, 121–3, 154, 156, 162, 182–3, 185, 255–7, 259; sack of Capua, 142–3; death of Alexander VI, 183–6, 256; ineffective intervention in Papal elections, 186–90; favours the election of Julius II, 192; conflict with Julius, 255–7; mentioned, 36, 260.
— Lucrezia, 6.
Borgo, 265.
Bormio, 90, 100.
Bouchage, Imbert de Batarnay, Sieur du, 2.
Bourbon, Anne de Beaujeu, Duchess of: *see under* Beaujeu.
— Charles of Montpensier, Duke of, 3.
— Gabrielle de, 114–15.
— Pierre de Beaujeu, Duke of: *see under* Beaujeu.
— Suzanne de, 3.
Bourgeoisie, the: rise of, 30.
Bourges, 23, 34, 117.
Brasca, Herasmo, 48.
Brescia, 262.
Briçonnet, Guillaume, Cardinal Archbishop of Saint-Malo: grief at Charles VIII's death, 19; a partisan of Ludovic Sforza, 32; out of favour, 62.
Bricot, Me. Thomas, 248–50.
Brittany: marriage of Anne and Louis XII, 4, 7–8, 13, 17–21, 26–7, 32, 34, 204, 206–7; former visit of Louis XII to, 10, 13; the Breton Guard, 27; revenue of, 34, 36; desire for independence, 26–7, 44–5, 48, 205–8, 229; naval activity in, 147–8; marriage of Princess Claude and question of the succession to, 205–8, 217, 249–50; policy of and charges against Marshal de Gié in relation to, 228, 231, 233, 235–6, 238, 240, 249–50; mentioned, 214, 227.
— Anne, Duchess of, Queen of France: grief at Charles VIII's death, 18–19; marries Louis XII, 4, 7–8, 13, 17–21, 32, 34, 204, 206–7; marriage contract, 19–20; influence and character, 25–7, 31, 33–4, 36–7, 135; her Court, 25–6, 31, 33, 60–1; marriage of Cesare Borgia, 21–2; opposed to Italian adventure, 36–7, 135; desires an Austrian marriage for Princess Claude, 204–8, 244–6; treaty of Lyons (1501), 208–9; receives the Archduke, 212–13; further treaties with Austria, 217–18, 228, 243, 246; opposition to her policy, 225, 242; trial of Marshal de Gié, 225, 229–41; enmity of Louise of Savoy to, 229; marriage of Claude with Francis of Angoulême, 250–1; mentioned, 1, 3, 48, 147, 188, 202.
Brussels, 243–4, 246.
Burgundy, 19, 48–51, 73–4, 205–6, 211, 217, 222, 246, 291; troops from, 84, 100, 104, 111–13.
— Charles the Bold of, 52.
Busalla, 286–7.

Caiazzo, Count of, 84, 87–8.
Calabria: assigned to Spain on partition, 136, 150; the Spaniards in, 141, 144, 158; the French in, 153, 157; defeat of d'Aubigny in, 173–4; mentioned, 152, 172.
— Ferdinand, Duke of, 141, 144–5.
Calais, 225.
Camerino, 185.
Canale, Manuele, 268.
Cannae, Field of, 175.
Canosa, 152–4, 163, 175, 178.
Capitanate, the 150–1.
Capua, 141–4, 178, 195.
Caravaggio, 89.
Carlotta of Naples, 6, 21–2, 34, 60.

Carretto, Marquis Alfonso del, 274.
Casa, Francesco della, 127, 135.
Casale, 104.
Cascina, 126, 140.
Castel dell' Uovo at Naples, 144, 178–9.
Castellaccio of Genoa, 283–4.
Castellaneta, 159.
Castelletto of Genoa, 282–5, 287–8.
Castello of Milan, 89, 91–2, 98–9, 101, 104, 108, 117–18, 156.
— Tarlatino di, 126, 275, 279–80.
Castellone, 193.
Castelnuovo, 87.
Castel Nuovo at Naples, 144, 178–9.
Castile: rival claims to the government of, 205–6, 209–10, 221–2, 243, 245, 247, 291.
Cerdagne, 47.
Cerignola, Battle of, 174–9, 200, 202, 227.
Cerigo, 149–50.
Cervia, 255, 261.
Cesare Borgia: *see* Borgia.
Cesena, 256, 259, 265.
Ceuta, Bishop of, 7–8, 11, 13, 16–17.
Chabannes, Jacques de: *see under* La Palice.
Chalon, Jean de: *see under* Orange.
Chandieu, Seigneur de, 176, 178.
Charente, the, 148.
Charles V, King of France, 39.
— VII, King of France, 35, 40.
— VIII, King of France: his death mentioned, 1–2, 7, 18–20, 33, 35, 43–4, 47–8, 50, 53, 58; his Court and servants, 3, 31, 62, 138, 147–8, 167; his claim to Naples, 4, 38, 70, 122; his Italian expedition, 5, 32, 47, 49, 53, 55, 57, 75, 79, 80, 82, 95, 121, 123, 125, 136, 138, 142, 144, 153, 226, 256, 277–8; minority of, 12, 27; marriage of, 17–20; prodigality of, 33, 62, 79; mentioned, 25, 34, 36, 59, 60, 239.
— Duke of Luxemburg, Prince of Austria (afterwards Charles V, Emperor): proposed marriage to Princess Claude of France, 26, 172, 205–14, 216–22, 225–6, 228–30, 239, 242–51, 262, 290.
— Orlando, Dauphin, 1.
— the Bold, 52.
Château-Chinon, 208
Chiavari, 274–5.
Chiavenna, 100.
Chimay, Prince of, 210–11.
Chinon, 14, 16, 17, 21.
Church, the Gallican: exempt from taxation, 35; Legatine authority of d'Amboise, 156, 192–3, 255.
Città di Castello, 182, 185.
Claude of France, Princess: proposed Austrian marriage for, 26, 172, 204–14, 216–22, 225–6, 228–31, 239, 242–7, 249–51, 262, 290; marriage with Francis of Angoulême, 207, 226, 228–30, 237–9, 242–4, 247–51; proposed English marriage for, 215; charges against Marshal de Gié in relation to, 225–6, 228–31, 233–4, 237–9.
Clement, Pope, 39.
Clérieux, Seigneur de, 16.
Clermont, Seigneur de, 16.
Cleves, Philippe of: *see under* Ravenstein.
Coëtivy, Louise de, 115 n.
Coëtmen, Olivier de, 232.
Coire, 100.
Coligny, Gaspard de, 176.
Colonna, Cardinal, 191, 201.
— Fabrizio: joins King Federigo, 141; defence of Capua, 141–3; the Combat of the Thirteen, 170; battle of Cerignola, 177–8; reconciliation with the Orsini, 189–91.
— Prospero: joins King Federigo, 141; defence of Naples, 141; the Combat of the Thirteen, 168–71; reduces the Abruzzi, 180; enmity to Cesare Borgia, 185–6; reconciliation with the Orsini, 189–91; battle of the Garigliano, 199.
Combat of the Eleven, 165–7.
— — — Thirteen, 165, 168–71.
Commynes, Philippe de, Seigneur d'Argenton, 28, 32, 59.

Como, 90, 98, 100–2.
Conseil, Grand, 34, 232–40.
Cordelière, the, 148.
Corfu, 149.
Corte, Bernardino da, 91–2, 99.
Council, the King's, 34.
Court, the Royal: reforms of, 25–6, 31; contemporary accounts of, 31–5, 59–60, 62, 127, 293.
Crema, 262.
Cremona, 69, 89, 95, 97, 187, 262.
Crusade, the last French, 147–50.
Crussol, M. de, 114–15.
Customary Law, 30.

Dalmatia, 255.
Dardanelles, the, 149.
Dauphiné, 81, 167.
Denmark, 51.
Desio, 102.
Dijon, Bailli of: *see under* Baissey.
Diois, 8.
Dolce, Zuam, 101–2.
Domodossola, 100, 111, 113.
Doria, House of, 268, 277.
— Andrea, 270–2.
Douay, 51.
Dresnay, Raynouard du, 41.
Dunois, Francis, Count of, 27.

Empire, the: relations with France, 49, 51, 76, 78, 108, 133, 135, 139, 210, 216–17, 221, 244, 290–1; with the Swiss, 54, 107; mentioned, 39, 72, 220, 259, 261.
England: Treaty of Étaples renewed, 35, 44–6, 69; Hundred Years' War, 40; independence of Brittany, 44–5; relations with Milan, 38, 46; with Maximilian, 50; with Scotland, 51; with Venice, 147; proposals for French marriage alliances, 214–15, 224–5; Spanish overtures to, 215.
Este, Ercole d': *see under* Ferrara.
— Isabella d', 156.
Estrada, Duke of, 215.
Étampes, 8, 60–1.
Étaples, Treaty of, 35, 44–6, 69.
Étréchy, 60 n.

Faenza, 140, 154, 256, 258–9, 261–2.
Fano, 256.
Federigo, King of Naples: refuses his daughter's hand to Cesare Borgia, 6–7, 21; his feeble support of Ludovic Sforza, 69–70, 76; hostility of Louis XII to, 34, 36, 47–8, 76–7; prospects of an accord, 66, 135; partition of his kingdom, 135–41; defeat and submission of, 141–5, 148; hypocritical professions of Ferdinand, 216.
Ferdinand, Duke of Calabria, 141, 144–5.
— the Catholic, of Aragon: makes peace with Louis XII in 1498, 46–8; partition of Naples, 44, 47, 134–41, 145, 206, 217, 221–4, 261; relations with Venice, 77, 164, 260; dispute about Naples, 150–1, 214, 216–17; treaty of Lyons (1503), 171–3, 180, 216; war on the Pyrenees, 180–2; victorious in Naples, 203, 216; claim to the government of Castile, 172, 205–6, 209–10, 221–3, 243, 245, 247, 291; treaty of Trent, 209–10; alarm at the Anglo-French *rapprochement*, 215; treaties of Blois, 217; death of Isabella, 221; marriage with Germaine de Foix, 221–4, 243–8, 262, 291; interview with Louis XII at Savona, 291–4; visits Naples, 291; refuses to meet Julius II, 291; mentioned, 45, 186, 208.
Ferrante (Ferdinand I), King of Naples, 150.
Ferrara, 119, 122.
— Ercole d'Este, Duke of: his neutral policy, 71; hostility to Venice, 71, 134, 262; relations with France, 93, 121.
Fieramosca, Ettore, 169–71.
Fiesco, del, Family, 269–70, 273–4, 277.
— Bartolommeo del, 267–8.

Fiesco, Gian Giorgio del, 267–8.
— Gian Luigi del, 268–9, 273–4.
— Filippino del, 273.
Finale, 274, 277.
— Cardinal of, 274, 292.
Flanders, 51, 211.
Florence: relations with Louis XII, 36, 44, 65, 67, 69, 93–4, 124–5, 127, 135, 140, 155, 260; with Alexander VI, 43–4; with Venice, 58, 65, 258–9, 262; with Cardinal d'Amboise, 67, 124; war with Pisa, 58, 65, 123–6.
Foggia, 158.
Foix, Germaine de: marries Ferdinand of Aragon, 221–4, 244, 262, 291; interview of Savona, 292–3.
— Jean de, Viscount of Narbonne, 22, 224.
Fontarabia, 180–1.
Forest Cantons, the, 129–33, 154.
Forlì, 122–3, 256, 265.
Fornovo, Battle of, 62, 71, 167, 226.
Fougères, 20.
Framizelles, Robinet de, 81.
France: accession of Louis XII, 1–4, 32–3, 48, 59–60; his character, 24–6, 33, 74, 79–80, 211–12, 223; his reforms, 25, 29–31, 34–5, 62, 79–81, 229, 236–7, 248–9; taxation and revenue, 25, 34–5, 74, 95, 248; Louis XII's divorce, 4–14, 16–18, 20, 23–4, 28, 34; union with Brittany, 4, 7–8, 17–21, 26–7, 32, 34, 44–5, 206–7, 228, 242; influence of Anne of Brittany, 25–7, 31, 33–4, 36–7, 135; influence of Georges d'Amboise, 25, 27–33, 62, 192–3, 226, 255; his candidature for the Papacy, 29, 183–8, 191–2, 204, 210, 248, 290–1; the Orleanist claim to Milan, 4, 6, 36–43, 46, 49, 62, 68, 70, 122, 134, 204; Italian policy of Louis XII, 4, 6, 8, 25, 32–3, 36–7, 44, 47, 52, 74–6, 124–5, 134–5, 204, 215; political situation in 1498, 43–4; hostility of Maximilian, 35–6, 48–51, 65–6, 69, 72–4, 135, 138–9, 153, 156, 206, 215, 245, 290–1; friendly relations with Spain, 35, 46–8, 69; with England, 35, 44–7, 69; with the Archduke, 35, 45, 47, 50–1, 69; with other powers, 44, 51, 65, 67, 69, 93–4; alliances—with the Swiss, 35, 52–5, 69, 83, 100, 107; with Savoy, 44, 55–6, 69, 74, 81, 93; with Venice, 32, 36–7, 57–69, 70–2, 76–7, 93, 145–50; with lesser Italian States, 44, 56–7, 71–2, 93, 121, 134, 179, 193, 196, 198; conquest of Milan, 43–69, 79–122, 124, 128–9, 136; misconduct and unpopularity of the French in Italy, 95–101, 119, 159; French influence in Italy, 121–3, 133–4, 162, 203; support of Cesare Borgia, 5–8, 14–17, 21–3, 70–1, 100–1, 121–3, 154–6, 162, 182–3, 186–90; support of Florence against Pisa, 123–7; quarrel with the Swiss and cession of Bellinzona, 100, 107, 127–33; the Angevin claim to Naples, 4, 38, 44, 62, 70, 122, 124, 134, 136, 151, 205, 221–2, 224; the partition of Naples, 44, 47, 135–45, 150–1, 206, 214, 217, 221–4, 261; treaty of Granada, 135–41; treaty of Lyons (1503), 171–3, 180, 216; war with Spain over the partition, 152–4, 157–68, 173–82, 188–91, 193–203, 214, 216, 229, 264; the last Crusade, 146–50; last gleams of chivalry, 165–71; Austrian marriage proposals for Princess Claude, 26, 172, 204–9, 216–18, 222, 225–6, 228–30, 232, 242–9; negotiations for the investiture of Milan, 206, 209–10, 212–14, 216, 218–23, 245; treaties of Lyons (1501), Trent, Blois, and Hagenau, 207–14, 216–18, 222, 242–3, 246, 261–2; impeachment of Marshal de Gié, 225–42; marriage of Princess Claude and Francis of Angoulême, 207, 226, 228–30, 237–9, 242–4, 246–51; Louis XII 'le Père du Peuple', 248–50; proposed

marriage alliances with England, 214–15, 224–5; friction with and unpopularity of Venice, 32, 36–7, 62, 67–8, 121–3, 134–5, 156, 160–5, 189–91, 210; projected league against Venice, 210, 218, 258–63, 293–4; marriage of Ferdinand the Catholic and Germaine de Foix, 221–4, 243–7, 262, 291; interview of Savona, 291–4; strained relations with Julius II, 255, 263–6, 290; proposed Council against him, 262; revolt of Genoa, 266–90; national character of the French, 203, 211, 244.
Francis of Valois, Count of Angoulême (afterwards Francis I): marriage with Princess Claude, 207, 226, 228–30, 237–9, 242–4, 247–51; position as heir presumptive, 214–15, 225, 229–30, 237; Marshal de Gié's guardianship of, 227–31, 233, 235, 237–9, 241; mentioned, 55.
Frankfort, 210, 213.
Fregoso, Family of, 280.
— Ottaviano, 280.
Friuli, 58.
Fronsac, Viscountess of, 227.

Gabelle, the, 35, 95.
Gaeta: assigned to France on partition, 136, 150; surrenders to the French, 143; besieged by the Spaniards, 178–80, 193, 198–9; surrenders to them, 199–202.
Gaillon, Château de, 29.
Galliate, 103.
Gallican Church: *see* Church.
Gallipoli, 157, 165.
Gandia, Duke of, 6.
Garigliano, River; French defeat on, 193–9, 203.
Gascony: troops from, 81, 125–6, 140, 178; their bad conduct, 97–8, 125–6.
Genoa: claim of Louis XII to, 36, 39; welcomes him to Italy, 93; used as a French naval base, 148, 154, 179; question of Princess Claude's succession to, 205, 217, 242; disturbances in, 266–70; appeals to Louis XII, 270–2; Ravenstein goes to restore order in, 271–3; attack on the Fieschi possessions, 273–5; charges against Royal officials, 275–7; attack on Monaco, 277–82; attacks on the French forts, 282–5; Paolo da Novi elected Doge, 285–6; Louis XII marches against, 286–8; submission and punishment of, 288–9; attitude of Julius II to the revolt, 290; attitude of Maximilian, 290–1; Ferdinand at, 291–2; mentioned, 41, 58, 85.
— Castellaccio of, 283–4.
— Castelletto of, 269, 282–5, 287–8.
Germaine de Foix: *see under* Foix.
Germany, 51–2, 91, 118, 123, 158, 161, 208–9, 213–14, 218, 259–60, 262, 291; German mercenaries—in the service of Ludovic Sforza, 83, 87, 103, 109, 112–13; of Maximilian, 153; of Spain, 175–7; mentioned, 74.
Ghiara d'Adda: *see under* Adda.
Gié, Pierre de Rohan-Guéménée, Maréchal de: his influence with Louis XII, 2, 28, 32, 82, 226–30, 234; his opposition to Venice, 32, 67–8; enters Milan with Louis XII, 93–4; assists him financially, 181; negotiates treaty of Lyons, 208; his position and career, 226–7; his guardianship of Francis of Angoulême, 227–31, 233, 235, 237–9, 241; his opposition to the Austrian marriage proposals, 225–6, 228–30, 237–9, 243, 250–1; his military reforms, 229–30, 236–7; Anne of Brittany's hostility to, 26, 229–32, 234–5, 237–8, 240; Louise of Savoy's hostility to, 228–9, 231, 237; Cardinal d'Amboise's hostility to, 229–32; charged with high treason, 225–6, 239; his trial ordered, 232; the indictment, 233; the evidence, 233–7; interrogated,

237–9; failure of the prosecution, 239; a new trial ordered, 240; the verdict, 241; reflections on the case, 241–2, 250–1.
Gioja, 174.
Giovinazzo, 157.
Giustinian, Antonio, 157, 184–5, 188–91, 201.
Giustiniani, Demetrio, 289.
— Paolo Battista, 268, 271.
Gonsalvo de Cordova: welcomed in Calabria, 141, 144; captures Federigo's heir, 145, 151; breach with the French, 151; besieged in Barletta, 152–4, 157–60; captures Ruvo, 159–60; difficulties with Venice, 161–5; Combat of the Thirteen, 168; ignores orders to suspend hostilities, 173; victory of Cerignola, 174–8; its fruits, 178–80; final defeat of the French in Naples, 193–200, 203; Alviano's tribute to, 200; Ferdinand's jealousy of, 291; honoured by Louis XII at Savona, 293; mentioned, 6, 167.
Gonzaga, Francesco: *see under* Mantua.
Gradenigo, Giuliano, 163–5.
Granada, Treaty of, 136–40, 144, 150–1.
Graville, Louis Malet de, Admiral, 23, 28, 48.
Grenoble, 116, 214.
— Bishop of, 167.
Grimaldi, Family of, 277.
— Luciano: his rule in Monaco, 278; attacked by the Genoese, 278–82.
Grimani, Admiral, 146.
Grisons, the, 107.
Gualterotti, Francesco, 57.
Guasco, Cesare, 75–6.
Guelders, Duke of, 35, 74, 205, 290.
Gurk, Bishop of, 75.
Guyenne, 215, 235.

Hagenau, Treaty of, 218–22, 246, 262.
Hédouville, M. de, 114.
Henry VII, King of England: makes peace with Louis XII, 35, 44–7; deserts Ludovic Sforza, 46; ridicules Maximilian's proposals for a war on France, 50; negotiates for French marriage alliances, 214–15, 224–5; receives Spanish overtures 215; mentioned, 147.
— Prince of Wales (afterwards Henry VIII): a French bride proposed for, 214–15, 224–5.
Hesdin, 51.
Humbercourt, Seigneur de, 174.
Hungary, 209, 215, 244.
— King of, 23, 209, 262.

Imola, 122–3, 140, 256.
Incisa, 86.
Innsbruck, 119, 213.
Isabella, Duchess of Bari, 152.
— Queen of Castile, 46–7, 77, 136, 138, 161, 164, 172, 186, 205–6, 209–10, 215–16, 221–2, 224, 245, 260.
Ischia, 144, 148, 179.
Italy: policy of Alexander VI, 4–8, 14–17, 21–3, 30–1; the Orleanist claim to Milan, 4, 6, 36–43, 46, 49, 62, 68, 70, 122, 134; the Angevin claim to Naples, 4, 38, 44, 62, 70, 122, 124, 134, 151, 221–2, 224; policy of Louis XII in, 4, 6, 8, 25, 32–3, 36–7, 43–5, 47, 52, 57–8, 70–1, 73–6, 122–3, 135, 154–6, 182–3, 204, 215; the partition of Naples, 44, 47, 135–45, 150–1, 171–3, 206, 214, 217, 221–4, 261; diplomatic preliminaries of the conquest of Milan, 43–78; policy of the Swiss in, 52–5; the conquest of Milan, 79–122; misconduct and unpopularity of French armies in, 95–100, 119, 159; French rule in Milan, 118–21; French preponderance in, 121–3, 133–4, 162, 203; ambitious designs of Cesare Borgia, 121–3, 154–6, 162, 182–3, 185, 255–7, 259; Florence and Pisa, 123–7; cession of Bellinzona, 132–3; the Spaniards introduced by French

policy, 138, 141; war in Naples, 150–4, 157–71, 173–80, 182, 188–91, 193–203, 214, 216, 229, 264; Combat of the Thirteen, 168–71; death of Alexander VI, 183–8; election of Julius II, 191–3; proposed cession to Austria of French possessions in, 204–6, 208–9, 216–18, 246, 261–2; the investiture of Milan, 206, 209–10, 212–14, 216–23, 245; policy of Julius II, 252–5; conflicting ambitions of Julius and Venice, 255–62; relations of Julius and France, 263–6; revolt of Genoa, 266–91; interview of Savona, 291–4.
Ivrea, 128.

Jeanne de France: her character, 4; her marriage to Louis XII, 5; Louis resolves to divorce her, 4, 7; divorce proceedings, 8–14, 17–18, 20; retirement and death at Bourges, 23–4, 34; mentioned, 205, 229, 240.
Joanna of Spain, 172, 205–6, 208–9, 212, 221–2.
John, King of Denmark, 51.
Julius II (formerly Cardinal Giuliano della Rovere): reconciled with Alexander VI, 7; meets Cesare Borgia in Provence, 15–16; favours Venice, 66–7; enters Milan with Louis XII, 93; candidature for the Papacy, 185–8; elected Pope, 191–2, 257; confirms Legatine authority of d'Amboise, 192–3; helps French refugees, 201–2; secret treaty of Blois, 218; his character and policy, 252–5; rivalry with Venice in Romagna, 255–60, 262; proposed attack on Venice, 258–9, 261–2; strained relations with Louis XII, 262–3, 265–6; proposal to convene a General Council against him, 262, 294; occupation of Perugia and Bologna, 263–6; revolt of Genoa, 266, 282, 290; Ferdinand the Catholic refuses to meet him, 291; mentioned, 21, 36, 221.

Katharine of Aragon, 214–15.

La Motte, Charles de, 169–71.
Landois, Pierre, 17.
Landriano, Antonio da, 89, 102.
Languedoc, 62.
La Palice, Jacques de Chabannes, Seigneur de: at the capture of Ludovic Sforza, 113; warfare in Naples, 144, 152, 159–60, 164; revolt of Genoa, 287.
La Rose, M. de, 21 n., 34.
La Trémoille, Charles de, Prince of Talmond, 115 n.
— Louis de: influence with Louis XII, 2, 28; hostility of Anne of Brittany to, 26; sent to command in Milan, 82, 107–8, 130; besieges Novara, 109–10; captures Ludovic Sforza, 110–15; chosen to command in Naples, 180, 182; falls ill and resigns, 188, 193.
La Turbie, 280.
Lecco, 69, 100, 122.
Leghorn, 58, 125.
Le Mans, Bishop of: *see under* Luxemburg.
Lepanto, 147.
— Battle of, 147.
Le Verger, Château, 241.
Ligny, Louis, Count of: influence with Louis XII, 2, 28, 32, 61; favours an alliance with Venice, 32, 67–8; receives Venetian envoys, 60–1; serves in Milan, 81–2, 87, 90, 93–4, 100–1, 104–6; unauthorized negotiations with Ludovic Sforza, 111–14; intrigues against Trivulzio, 120; Bayard serves in his company, 167; mentioned, 115.
Liguria, 286, 290.
Lille, 51.
Loano, 277.
Locarno, 130.
Loches, 106, 116–17, 231–2, 234.

Lodi, 89, 103, 108.
Loire, River, 14, 230.
Lombardy, 74, 85, 87, 99, 100, 107, 110, 121, 123, 131–2, 285–6.
Lomellina, the, 149–50.
London, 222.
Longjumeau, 60 n.
Loredan, Antonio, 32, 59, 61.
Lorraine, Duke of, 32, 48, 59.
Louis I, Duke of Orleans, 39.
— XI, King of France, 3, 4, 9, 10, 30, 40, 43, 55, 79, 211, 226, 227.
— XII, King of France (formerly Duke of Orleans): his accession, 1–4, 32–3, 48, 59–60; his character and appearance, 24–6, 33, 211–12, 223, 255; his health, 24, 226, 230–1, 233–5, 237, 242–3, 248; his economical disposition, 25–6, 33, 34 n., 74, 79–80, 180–1; his reforms, 25, 29–31, 34–5, 62, 79–81, 229, 236–7, 248–9; divorces Jeanne, 4–5, 7–14, 16–18, 20, 23, 28, 34; marries Anne of Brittany, 4, 7–8, 13, 17–21, 26–7, 32, 34, 44–5, 204, 206–7; her influence, 25–7, 31, 33–4, 36–7, 135; influence of Georges d'Amboise, 25, 27–33, 62, 192–3, 226, 255; the Orleanist claim to Milan, 4, 6, 36–43, 46, 49, 62, 68, 70, 122, 134, 204; Italian policy, 4, 6, 8, 25, 32–3, 36–7, 44, 47, 52, 73–6, 124–5, 134–5, 204, 215; hostility of Maximilian, 35–6, 48–51, 65–6, 72–4, 135, 138–9, 153, 156, 206, 215, 245, 290–1; the conquest of Milan—diplomatic preliminaries, 35–6, 43–69; military preparations, 73–83; policy of 'frightfulness', 84–5, 87; submission of Milan, 90–2; visits Milan, 92–7, 118; revolt of Milan, 101; reconquest of Milan, 104, 106–7; capture and captivity of Ludovic Sforza, 114–17; dismisses Trivulzio, 120; influence in Italy, 121–3, 133–4, 162, 203; supports Cesare Borgia, 5–8, 14–17, 21–3, 70–1, 121–3, 154–6, 162, 182–3, 186–90; supports Florence against Pisa, 123–7; quarrel with the Swiss and cession of Bellinzona, 100, 107, 127–33; the Angevin claim to Naples, 4, 38, 44, 62, 70, 122, 124, 134, 136, 151, 205, 221–2, 224; partition of Naples, 44, 47, 135–45, 150–1, 171–3, 180, 206, 214, 216–17, 221–4, 261; consequent war with Spain, 154–8, 161–2, 180–2, 189, 200–3, 214, 216, 230, 264; helps Venice against the Turk, 146–7; candidature of d'Amboise for the Papacy, 184–8, 191–2; Austrian marriage proposals for Princess Claude, 26, 172, 204–14, 216–22, 225–6, 228–32, 239, 242–7, 249–51; investiture of Milan, 206–10, 212–14, 216, 218–23, 245; visit of Philip and Joanna, 210–13; impeachment of Marshal de Gié, 225–42; marriage of Claude and Francis of Angoulême, 228–30, 237–9, 242–4, 246–51; hailed as 'le Père du Peuple', 248–50; proposed marriage alliances with England, 214–15, 224–5; anger with and projected league against Venice, 89, 121–2, 134–5, 156, 160–5, 189–91, 210, 218, 258–63; marriage of Ferdinand the Catholic and Germaine de Foix, 221–4, 243–7, 262, 291; interview of Savona with Ferdinand, 291–4; strained relations with Julius II, 252, 263–6, 290; revolt of Genoa, 266, 270–2, 274–9, 282–4, 286–9, 291.
Louise, the, 15.
Louise of Savoy: *see under* Savoy.
Louvain, M. de, 114.
Lucca, 94, 121, 126, 140.
Lucerne, 54–5.
— treaty of, 54–5.
Ludovic il Moro: *see under* Sforza.
Lugano, 130–1.
Luxemburg, Charles of: *see* Charles.
— Philippe of, Bishop of Le Mans and Cardinal, 11, 13, 16.

Lyons, 15, 16, 36, 77, 81, 92, 107, 116, 131, 172–3, 231, 234–5, 237.
— Treaty of (in 1501), 208.
— Treaty of (in 1503), 171–3, 180, 216.
Lys-Saint-Georges, 117.

Machiavelli, Niccolò, 16–17, 123, 127, 135, 185, 196–7, 203, 257–8, 264–5.
Mâcon, 51, 217.
Madrid, 172.
Maillard, Olivier, 13.
Maine, Seneschal of, 236.
Mainz, 213.
Malaga, 136.
Malatesta, Pandolfo, 256.
Malvezzi, Lucio, 87.
Manfredi, Astorre, 256.
Manfredonia, 144.
Mantua, 119, 134.
— Francesco Gonzaga, Marquis of: shifty policy, 71–2; relations with Trivulzio, 82; enters Milan with Louis XII, 93; relations with Ludovic Sforza, 103–4; French hostility to, 121, 134; commands the French in Naples, 193, 196; proposed league against Venice, 262; interview of Savona, 292; mentioned, 15.
Marcoussis, treaty of, 47–8.
Marengo, 287.
Margaret of Angoulême: *see under* Angoulême.
Marignano, battle of, 115 n.
Marino, 141.
Marseilles, 8, 15, 160, 180–1.
Mary Tudor, Princess of England, afterwards Queen of France, 46.
Maximilian I, King of the Romans and Emperor-elect: his hostility to France, 35–6, 48–51, 65, 72–4, 135, 138–9, 153, 156, 206, 215, 245, 290–1; his support of Ludovic Sforza, 43, 52–5, 69, 72–3, 76, 78, 83, 87, 91, 99–100, 104, 107–8, 118–19; relations with Venice, 58, 65, 77, 210, 251, 260–2, 265; with the Swiss, 52–5, 77, 100, 290; with England, 44–5, 50; grants Louis XII the investiture of Milan, 206, 209–10, 212–14, 216–23; proposed marriage of Princess Claude with his grandson, Charles, 206, 208, 239, 244, 249, 251, 262, 290; treaty of Trent, 209–10, 212–13; treaties of Blois, 216–18, 220, 222, 261–2; treaty of Hagenau, 218–21; reform of the Church, 210; relations with Julius II, 258–9, 262, 264; mentioned, 62, 246, 294.
Medici, House of, 155.
— Piero de', 155, 199.
Mediterranean Sea, the, 148–9.
Melfi, 178.
Mendoza, Diego de, 169, 177.
Mentone, 277–9, 282.
Meran, 90.
Messina, 158.
Michiel, Niccolò, 31, 59.
Milan, Castello of, 89, 91–2, 98–9, 101, 104, 108, 117–18, 156.
— City of: flight of Ludovic Sforza from, 89–90; occupied by the French, 90–5; bad behaviour of the French in, 95–8; return of Ludovic, 101–3; scarcity and discontent in, 108–9; reoccupied by the French, 118–21; meeting of Louis XII and Cesare Borgia in, 156; mentioned, 84.
— Duchy of: the Orleanist claim to, 4, 6, 36–43, 46, 49, 62, 68, 70, 122, 134, 204–5; Louis XII's designs on, 8, 36–7, 60; diplomatic preliminaries of the French conquest, 32, 43–78; relations with the Swiss, 52–5, 130, 132–3, 290; with Venice, 57–69, 94; cession of the Ghiara d'Adda to Venice, 65–6, 69, 95–7, 122, 260–2; political isolation of, 69–78; military condition of, 83–5; the French invasion, 85–9; desperate situation of, 89–90; submits to Louis XII, 90–5; misconduct of the French in, 95–100; rebels against Louis,

98–103; French measures for its reconquest, 106–8; again submits to the French, 118–21, 127–8; political results of the French conquest, 121–3, 127, 133; Swiss invasion and cession of Bellinzona, 127–33; proposed inclusion in Princess Claude's dowry, 204–5, 208, 217–18, 242, 246, 249; grant to Louis XII of the investiture of, 206, 209–10, 212–14, 216–23, 245; mentioned, 135, 187, 192, 201, 263, 265, 276, 278.
Minervino, 167.
Mola di Gaeta, 199.
Molfetta, 157.
Monaco, 275, 277–82, 284–5.
Monopoli, 157–8.
Montauban, 27.
— Jean de, 226.
— Marie de, 227.
Monte Carlo, 279.
Monte d'Orlando, 180, 200.
Montefiore, 256, 259.
Montepulciano, 121.
Montferrat, 41, 44, 56–7, 105.
— Marquis of, 93, 292.
Montlhéry, 60 n.
Montpensier, Charles de: *see under* Bourbon.
Morone, Girolamo, 97.
Mortara, 89, 105, 109.
Moulins, 2.
Mytilene, 149, 160.

Nantes, 13, 20.
Naples, Cardinal of, 184, 191.
— Carlotta of, 6, 21–2, 34, 60.
— Castel dell' Uovo of, 178–9.
— Castel Nuovo of, 144, 178–9.
— City of; assigned to Louis XII on partition, 136, 150; occupied by the French, 141, 143–5; taken by the Spaniards, 178–9; mentioned, 148.
— Kingdom of: the Angevin claims to, 4, 38, 44, 62, 70, 122, 124, 134, 136, 151, 205, 221–4; negotiates for an alliance with Alexander VI, 6–7, 21; French designs on, 36, 47, 62, 66, 74, 76–7, 122, 124, 134–5; Charles VIII's invasion, 47, 49, 53, 80, 82, 95, 138–9, 142, 144, 256, 278; partition of, 44, 47, 135–41, 150–1, 171–3, 206, 216–17, 221–4, 261; relations with Venice, 58, 76–7, 122, 256; support of Ludovic Sforza, 69–70, 76; Franco-Spanish invasion, 140–5; quarrel over the partition, 150–1, 214; war between French and Spaniards in, 152–4, 157–61, 165–71, 173–80, 183, 216, 260, 264; difficulties of the Venetians as neutrals in, 161–5; chivalrous combats in, 165–71; a new French army for, 180, 186, 188–91; final defeat of the French in, 193–203, 230; included in the dowry of Germaine de Foix, 221–4; Ferdinand the Catholic visits, 291; mentioned, 131, 133.
Narbonne, 27, 182.
— Cardinal of, 248, 292.
— Jean de Foix, Viscount of, 224.
— Marie of Orleans, Viscountess of, 224, 250.
Navarino, 146.
Navarre, 47, 49.
— King of, 22.
Navarro, Pedro; surrenders at Canosa, 153–4; reduces the Neapolitan castles, 178–9; battle on the Garigliano, 194; mentioned, 181.
Navy, the: the *Louise*, 15; operations against the Turks, 145–50; against the Spaniards, 153, 157, 160, 165; reverse to Prégent de Bidoux at Otranto, 160–2; the loss of Naples, 179–80, 193–4, 198–200; raid on the Spanish coast, 180–1; revolt of Genoa, 285–6, 288–9.
Negropont, 148.
Nemours, Louis, Duke of: his influence with Louis XII, 28; appointed to command in Naples, 145; precipitates a conflict with Spain, 151; siege of Barletta, 152–

4, 168; his apathy, 152–4, 157–8; and bad strategy, 159–60; ordered to suspend hostilities, 173; defeat and death at Cerignola, 174–7, 227; mentioned, 164.
Nice, 279.
Normandy, 1, 81, 148, 215.
Norway, 51.
Nouailles, Regnault de, 284.
Novara, 53, 76, 92, 103–6, 109–15, 117–19.
Novi, Paolo da: enters on public office, 273; attack on Monaco, 281, 285; elected Doge, 285–6; defence of Genoa, 286–8; executed, 289.
Noyers, 208.

Oderico, Niccolò, 270.
Ofanto, River, 150, 175.
Oglio, River, 89.
Oneglia, 277.
Orange, Jean de Chalon, Prince of, 1–3, 18, 48.
— Princess of, 18–19.
Orchies, 51.
Ordelaffi, Antonio, 256.
Orleans, Bishop of, 11–12.
— Duchy of, 33, 205, 242.
— House of, 11, 40–1, 211.
— Louis I, Duke of, 39.
— Louis II, Duke of: *see* Louis XII.
— Marie of, Viscountess of Narbonne, 224, 250.
Orsini, Family of, 43, 182, 185, 189–91.
— Cardinal, 182.
— Fabio, 186.
— Gian Giordano, 183.
— Giulio, 189.
Orvieto, 264.
Ostia, 15; 291.
Otranto, 157, 160–2, 179, 260.

Padua, 261.
Palestro, 104.
Pandolfini, Francesco, 223–4, 243, 263–4.
Papacy, the: relations with France, 4–5, 7–8, 15–17, 21–3, 36, 43–4, 47, 49, 62, 64, 67–71, 75–6, 93, 122, 138–41, 154–6, 192–3, 218, 252, 255, 258–9, 261–6, 290, 294; with Naples, 6–7, 21, 138–41; with Milan, 6, 23, 43, 67–8, 70–1, 75–6, 93; with Venice, 43–4, 62, 64, 67–70, 77, 122, 147, 218, 254–60, 264–5; with Florence, 43–4; with Spain, 138–41, 259, 294; with Maximilian, 155, 218, 258–9, 261–2; candidature of Georges d'Amboise, 29, 156, 184–8, 191–3, 204, 210, 248, 290–1; Julius II and the temporal power, 253–61, 263–6.
Papal States, the, 253–60.
Paris, 7, 8, 12, 13, 19, 35, 50, 56, 59, 60, 61, 81, 181, 211, 241.
— Parlement of; *see* Parlement.
— University of, 12, 13, 31.
Parlement of Paris, 13, 31, 34, 232, 244–5, 249.
— of Toulouse, 240–1.
Parlements, the, 8, 30, 35, 248.
Parmesan, the, 104.
Pavia, 38, 87–9, 92–3, 104.
— Certosa of, 93.
— County of, 219–20.
Penhoët, Françoise de, Viscountess of Fronsac, 227.
Pensée, the, 149–50.
Perpignan, 181.
Perugia, 182, 185, 189, 264–5.
Pesaro, 103, 123, 154, 185, 256.
Petit, Étienne, 236–7.
Petrucci, Pandolfo, 182.
Philibert le Beau of Savoy: *see under* Savoy.
Philip of Austria, Archduke: peace with France, 35, 45, 47, 50–1, 69; treaty of Lyons (1503), 171–3, 180, 216; proposed marriage of Prince Charles and Princess Claude, 205–14, 216–22, 225–6, 243–7, 249–51, 262; claim to the government of Castile, 205–6, 209–10, 221–2, 243, 245, 247; treaty of Lyons (1501), 207–9; of Trent, 209, 213; visits France, 210–13; treaties of Blois,

216–18, 222–3, 243–4; of Hagenau, 218–23, 246; death of, 291; mentioned, 224, 252.
Philippe of Savoy, 55, 167.
Piacenza, 86, 89, 103–4, 118, 125.
Picardy, 81.
Piccolomini, Francesco, Cardinal of Siena: *see* Pius III.
Piennes, M. de, 219–21.
Pietrasanta, 121.
Pieve di Teco, 277–8.
Piombino, 155, 185.
Pirovani, Maffeo (Milanese agent), 56.
Pisa: disputes between Venice and Ludovic Sforza about, 46, 58, 124; Venetian support of, 65, 68, 77; relations with France, 93–4; Louis XII aids Florence against, 123–5; the attack fails, 125–6, 135; anger of Louis, 127; aids the Genoese, 279; mentioned, 140, 155, 294.
Pius III, Francesco Piccolomini, Cardinal of Siena, afterwards Pope: elected Pope, 188; death of, 191–2, 256.
Ploret, Roland de, 227, 230, 232, 236.
Po, River, 86, 88.
Polcevera Valley, the, 286.
Pole, Edmund de la, 215.
Polesine, the, 71.
Poncher, Étienne, Bishop of Paris: his influence, 28; embassy to Hagenau, 219–21.
Pontbriand, François de, 231, 234, 236.
— Pierre de, 231–2, 234, 236–7, 239.
Pontecurone, 87.
Pontremoli, 140.
Porto Cesenaticho, 259.
Portugal, 147.
Prégent de Bidoux: early career, 148; serves against the Turks, 149; intercepts Spanish supplies, 153, 157, 160, 165; reverse at Otranto, 160–2, 179, 260; defence of Gaeta, 179–80; further operations in Naples, 193–4, 198–9; revolt of Genoa, 285–6, 289; interview of Savona, 292.
Principate, the, 150.
Procé, Jean Grimaud, Seigneur de, 234.
Provence, 16, 32, 48, 62, 81, 148.
Pyrenees, the, 26, 46, 229.

Quirino, Vincenzo, 218–21, 224, 243–6, 262.

Rapallo, Battle of, 53.
Ravenna, 255, 261.
Ravenstein, Philippe of Cleves, Seigneur de: receives the submission of Naples, 144–5; operations against the Turks, 145, 148–9; overtaken by disaster, 149–50; Governor of Genoa, 268; disturbances in Genoa, 270, 272–3, 275; charges against, 275–7, 282; mentioned, 16, 278.
Reggio, 159, 173.
Renée de France, Princess, 204–5.
Rheims, 24.
Rhodes, 65, 146, 147, 149.
Riarii, the, 256.
Rieux, Marshal de, 180–2, 238.
Rimini, 154, 256, 261–2, 265.
Rivarolo, 287.
Riviera of Genoa, the, 271, 280, 292; Riviera di Levante, 274–7; Riviera di Ponente, 274, 277, 282, 285.
Robertet, Florimond: his influence, 28; marriage of Princess Claude, 242; views on the policy of Julius II, 264.
Roccabruna, 277–9, 282.
Rocca d'Angitola, 174.
— d'Evandro, 180.
— Secca, 142, 193.
Rochefort, Guy de, Chancellor: his influence, 28, 32, 62; legal reforms, 30; receives the homage of the Archduke, 51; negotiations with Venice, 67–8; trial of Marshal de Gié, 232; marriage of Princess Claude, 242, 248–50; threatens Julius II, 263.
Rohan, House of, 226–7.
— Vicomte de, 48.

Romagna: ambitions of the Borgias in, 43–4, 122–3, 154–6, 162, 182–3, 185, 254–7, 259; Venetian ambitions in, 44, 123, 162, 255–62; French troops in, 101, 103, 122–3, 125; interest of Julius II in, 255–8.
Rome: preparations for Cesare Borgia's visit to France, 15; d'Amboise visits, 29, 184–92, 229; political reports from, 75, 157, 196, 254, 257–8; French troops in, 140–1, 151, 188, 197, 201–3; Cesare Borgia's captives sold in, 143; death of Alexander VI, 182–3, 185–7; Franco-Spanish rivalry in, 189–90; death of Pius III, 191; mentioned, 6, 7, 8, 11, 49, 71, 77, 82, 155, 193, 195, 209, 248, 260, 264, 265, 266.
Roquebertin, Lieutenant-Governor of Genoa: the first Genoese disturbances, 268–70; charges against him, 270–2, 275–7; leaves Genoa, 283, 289.
Rouen, 27, 29, 35.
— Cardinal of: *see under* Amboise.
Roussillon, 47, 49, 180–1.
Rovere, Cardinal Giuliano della: *see* Julius II.
Roveredo, 261.
Ruvo, 159–60, 169.

Saint-Aubin-du-Cormier, battle of, 2.
St. Bernard Pass, the, 107.
Saint-Malo, Cardinal of: *see under* Briçonnet.
Saint-Michel, Order of, 8, 16.
Saint-Quentin, 212.
Salazar, Pierre de, 283–5.
Salces, 181–2, 222.
Sale, 87.
Salic Law, 205, 251.
Saluzzo, 44, 56–7.
— Marquis of, 93, 179, 196, 198.
Sampierdarena, 287.
Sandricourt, M. de, 201.
San Germano, 141–2, 193, 196.
San Giorgio, Cardinal of, 191.
San Severino, Cardinal of, 141, 263.
— — Galeazzo di, 83–4, 86–90, 100, 102–3, 113.
— — Fracassa di, 84.
San Severo, 202.
Sant' Angelo, Castle of, 186, 190, 256.
Sant' Arcangelo, 259.
Saronno, 128.
Sauli, Family of, 272.
— Vincenzo, 269.
Saumur, 233.
Savelli, the, 185.
Savona, 85, 277.
— Interview of, 291–4.
Savonarola, Girolamo, 44.
Savoy, 40, 41, 44, 55, 56, 69, 81, 84, 167.
— Bastard of, 55–6.
— Bianca of, 55.
— Bona of, 36.
— Louise of, Countess of Angoulême: Anne of Brittany's hostility to, 207, 229; Henry VII proposes marriage, 224–5; her share in the impeachment of Marshal de Gié, 227–31, 233–9; marriage of Francis, 228–30, 238–9, 250.
— Philibert le Beau of, 55–6, 74, 81, 93, 159–60, 277–9.
— Philippe of, 55, 167.
Scandinavia, 51–2.
Schiner, Matthias, 290.
Scotland, 44, 46, 51.
Schwyz, Canton of, 54, 130.
Segré, Seigneur de, 230, 234–6.
Seminara, 173–4.
Senlis, treaty of, 48, 51.
Sesia, River, 105.
Seyssel, Claude de, 251.
Sforza, Ascanio, Cardinal: flees from Rome, 70–1; flees from Milan, 89; returns, 100–2, 104, 108–9; is captured, 118, 122; is released, 186–7, 210; his share in Papal elections, 186–8, 191–2; death of, 263.
— Caterina, 71, 121–3.
— Francesco, 38, 40–1.
— Galeazzo Maria, 36, 41.

Sforza, Gian Galeazzo, 41, 90, 118.
— Giovanni, 256.
— Hermes, 102.
— Ludovic, il Moro, Duke of Milan: his relations with Venice, 5, 41, 43–4, 46, 57–8, 73–4, 77–8, 88, 146; with Naples, 6–7, 69–70, 76; with Alexander VI, 6–7, 22, 43, 70–1; his partisans in France, 32, 74; hostility of Louis XII to, 33, 36; and of d'Amboise, 36, 77; the claim to Milan, 36–43; Maximilian's support of, 43, 52–5, 69, 72–3, 76, 78, 83, 87, 91, 99, 100, 104, 107–8, 118–19, 217, 290; relations with England, 46; with the Swiss, 52–5, 73, 100, 104–5, 107–15, 130; with Savoy, 55–6; with Florence, 65, 124; alliance of France and Venice against, 61–9, 76; his isolation, 69–72, 99; his optimism, 73–6; hostility of Trivulzio to, 82–3; military preparations, 83–5; unpopularity, 88–9, 95–6, 108–9; defeat and flight, 89–90, 98–9; treachery of Bernardino da Corte, 91–2, 99; revulsion of feeling in his favour, 96–9, 101–2, 120; returns and recovers the Duchy, 99–105, 123, 129; besieged in Novara, 101–10; captured, 110–15; captivity and death, 115–17; his fall referred to, 119–21, 128, 134, 209–10, 213; mentioned, 3.
Sicily, 32, 153, 158, 160–1, 163, 173.
Siena, 93–4, 121, 140, 182.
— Cardinal of: *see* Pius III.
Sieve, River, 140.
Sinigaglia, 182, 185.
Sixtus IV, Pope, 254.
Solero, 86.
Somme towns, the, 50.
Soncino, Raimondo di, 46.
Sotomayor, Alonso de, 165, 167–8, 170.
Spain: peace with France, 35, 69, 70; relations with England, 45–6; with Venice, 77, 158, 162–5; partition of Naples, 135–45; quarrels with France over the partition, 150–1, 154, 221–4, 261; war in Naples, 152–4, 157–62, 165–8, 173–80, 188–91, 216–17, 222; treaty of Lyons (1503), 171–3, 180, 216; French attack on, 180–2, 229; influence on Papal elections, 191–2; final defeat of the French in Naples, 193–203; rival claims to the government of Castile, 205–6, 209–10, 221–3, 243, 245, 247; treaty of Lyons (1501), 208–9; marriage of Ferdinand and Germaine de Foix, 221–5, 245–6, 262, 291; visit of the Archduke, 247; interview of Savona, 291–4; mentioned, 49, 116, 147, 215, 259.
Spezzia, 274–5.
Spigno, 85.
Spinola, Family of, 277.
— Luca, 278.
Stella, J. P., 59–60.
Stuart, Jean, 174.
— Béraud: *see* Aubigny.
Suio, 198.
Susa, 114–15.
Swabian War, the, 100.
Sweden, 51.
Switzerland: relations with France, 35–6, 52–5, 69, 83, 100, 107, 127–33, 156; with Maximilian, 53–4, 73, 76–7, 100, 290; interests in Milan, 52–3, 107, 130, 132–3, 290; Swiss mercenaries in the French service, 52–4, 65, 81, 100, 104, 107, 110, 124, 127–30, 140, 143, 153–4, 174 n., 176–8, 180, 196, 229, 277, 287, 290; Ludovic Sforza enlists troops in, 83–4, 100, 103–4; their dissatisfaction with him, 105–6, 109; they refuse to fight, 110–11; he is captured, 111–14; failure of the Swiss mercenaries at Pisa, 125–6; their mutinous conduct in Milan, 127–31, 133; treaty of Arona and cession of Bellinzona, 132–3; battle of Cerignola, 176–8; revolt of Genoa, 277, 287, 290.

Tanaro, River, 85–6.
Taranto, 6, 141, 144–5, 151, 157, 159, 165.
Tarlatino di Castello (or Tarlatini), 126, 275, 279–80.
Taxation, 25, 34–5, 74, 95, 248.
Terra di Lavoro, 136, 150–1.
Terrail, Pierre, Seigneur de Bayard: *see* Bayard.
Terranuova, 159, 173.
Thirteen, Combat of the, 165, 168–71.
Tiano, 142.
Tiber, River, 6.
Ticino, River, 103, 112.
Tirano, 100.
Tonnerre, Antoinette, Countess of, 115.
Tortona, 86, 104, 109.
Toulouse, 240.
— Parlement of, 240–1.
— Seneschal of, 16.
Tournay, See of, 244, 247.
Tours, 8, 10, 12, 233.
— States-General of (1484), 12.
— — — — (1506), 248–50.
Towns, the, 248.
Traetto, 194.
Trani, 163–6, 170.
Trans, M. de Villeneuve, Baron de, 8, 260.
Trecate, 109.
Trent, 113.
— treaty of, 209–10, 214; articles supplementary to, 212–13, 217.
Treves, Elector of, 219–20.
Treviso, 262.
Trivulzio, Arasimo di, 156.
— Gian Giacomo: treaty with Savoy, 56; in favour with Louis XII, 62; chosen to command in Milan, 81–2; his character and influence, 82–3; invasion of Milan, 85–94; Governor of the Milanese, 94–5; bad government and unpopularity, 95–9, 119–20; evacuates Milan, 101–3; Ludovic Sforza's antipathy, 102, 113; incompetent leadership, 103–5; at the siege of Novara, 109; returns to Milan, 118; is recalled, 119–20; mentioned, 76, 123, 186.
— Zuam Francesco, 85.
Troja, 151, 202.
Turin, 56, 59, 286.
Turks, the, 63, 65–6, 68–9, 71–2, 74, 76–8, 122, 134–6, 139–40, 146–8, 209, 213, 219, 221, 294.
Tuscany, 123, 127, 140, 156.
Tyrol, the, 90.

Universities, the, 248.
Unterwalden, Canton of, 54, 130.
Urbino, Duke of, 155, 185, 259.
Urfé, Francois d', 165–7, 176.
Uri, Canton of, 130, 132.

Valais, the, 107.
Valence, 8.
Valentinois, 8.
— Duke of: *see under* Borgia.
Valenza, 86.
Valois, Francis of: *see* Francis.
Valori, Niccolò, 260.
Valtelline, the, 90, 100, 122, 213.
Vatican, the, 7.
Velletri, 142.
Venice: French partisans of, 32, 82; unpopularity in France, 32, 36–7, 62, 259–61; French opponents of, 32, 67–8, 210, 258; relations with Milan, 41, 43–4, 46, 57–8, 73–4, 76–8, 88, 146; with Savoy, 56; with Maximilian, 58, 77, 210, 258, 260, 265; with Naples, 58; with Florence and Pisa, 58, 124, 258–9; with the Marquis of Mantua, 71–2; with Spain, 77, 138–9, 153, 160–5, 223, 260; alliance with France against Milan, 32, 58–71, 76–7, 95–7, 108, 122, 145–50, 260; invasion of Milan, 83–5, 87–9, 103, 105; welcomes Louis XII to Italy, 93–4; unpopularity in Milan, 94; capture of Ascanio Sforza, 118, 122, 187; regrets French successes, 121–2, 134–5, 156, 162, 173, 189–91, 260; policy in Romagna, 44,

122–3, 162, 255–62; the Turkish menace, 66, 68, 72, 76, 136, 145–50; interests of and neutrality in Naples, 70, 76–7, 122, 158, 160–5, 189–91, 223, 256, 259–60; chivalrous combats under her aegis, 165–71; death of Alexander VI, 183–4; election of Julius II, 191–2, 257; relations with Julius, 254–65; proposed league against her, 210, 218, 259–63, 293–4.
— League of, 5, 43–4, 47, 50, 71, 123–4.
Venosa, 178–9, 202.
Ventimiglia, 278.
Vercelli, 86, 92, 105, 113, 128.
— treaty of, 5, 43, 57.
Verona, 261.
Vesc, Étienne de, 147–8.
Vespolate, 109.
Vicenza, 261.
Vigevano, 89, 92, 104–6.
Villeneuve, M. de, Baron de Trans, 8, 260.
Vincennes, 59.
Visconti, Family of, 38, 96, 227.
— Bernabò, 38.
— Bianca, 38–9, 41.
— Filippo Maria, 38–41.
— Gabriello, 38.
— Galeazzo (Duke of Milan), 38.
— Galeazzo (diplomatic agent), 100.
— Gian Galeazzo, 38, 40, 42.
— Jacopo, 41.
— Valentine, 38, 40, 42.
Vitelli, Family of, 182, 185.
— Vitellozzo, 155.
Voghera, 86.
Volo, 148.
Volterra, Cardinal of, 258.
Volturno, River, 142.

Zante, 148.
Zorzi, Hieronimo, 31–2, 59.

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